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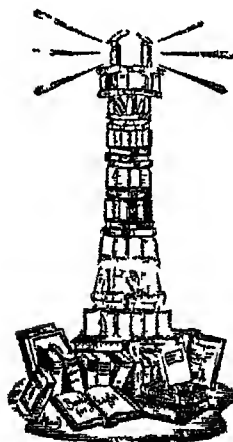
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Kitab Mahal National Broadcast Series No. 4

THE BRITISH CASE AGAINST INDIA

By
MANEK J. GAZDAR

With a Foreword By
YUSUF MEHERALLY



KITAB MAHAL
ALLAHABAD

First Edition, 1945

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PUBLISHED BY KITAB MAHAL, 56-A, ZERO ROAD,
ALLAHABAD AND PRINTED BY M. K. DIKSHIT
AT THE JAGAT PRESS, ALLAHABAD

FOREWORD

Mr. Gazdar's little book is written with wide knowledge, great sincerity and not a little passion. He sees the issues clearly and writes about them with forceful conviction. To the task, he brings a thorough acquaintance with the literature on the subject and much painstaking integration of material.

The writer has been a prominent member of the Freedom Group in Bombay. He was one of the silent organisers of the remarkable manifesto, issued under one thousand Parsi signatures, emphatically repudiating the statement made in the House of Commons by Major Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister of Great Britain, that the Parsi community was one of the minorities in India that needed special protection. Though this is Mr. Gazdar's first book he has been a frequent contributor to the periodical press under various nom-de-plumes. His legal training and sense of humour seem to have stood him in good stead.

The book bristles with controversial issues. It is written with a forthrightness and vigour that provoke thought, even when one does not fully agree with the writer in every particular. He has certainly not hesitated to call a spade a spade and has sometimes even called the garden implement by the less conventional name. It has the further merit of helping to sweep many cobwebs away. This stimulating and timely study will, I hope, reach a large circle of readers.

YUSUF MEHERALLY

APOLOGIA

The following pages, in their present form have grown out of, and been inspired by a announcement of the National Liberal Federation of Lahore of an essay competition on "The Communal Problem, its Causes and Solution". These pages were begun with the idea of being forwarded as an entry for this competition, but when they were completed and read and re-read, the conviction grew on their composer that, to borrow an expression from these pages themselves, they would be "dropped, like a piece of burning coal, too hot to be held" by those for whom they were intended. Accordingly they see the light of day in this garb.

The writer feels no sense of guilt or shame in admitting that this little attempt contains nothing new; but he has a hunch that it serves the useful purpose of emphasising, without mincing matters, that first things should come first, and, as stated in the final pages, that desperate diseases require equally drastic remedies.

It was Mark Twain, who horrified a parson, just fresh from preaching what the latter prided himself in considering a very original sermon, by telling him that he had read every word

of it in a book he had got with him, and offered to send this work to the reverend gentleman. Next day, a copy of a standard dictionary was received by the preacher. A charge may be levelled, that, if not every word, a great part of this work may be read in other books. While willingly pleading guilty to the charge, it is open to one to raise the plea of the Swiss engineer, who called in by an Ahmedabad mill magnate to see what was wrong with the machinery and set it right, presented a bill for Rs. 1,000 after tinkering at the machinery with a hammer for a few minutes. Although thankful that profitable Government contracts, relating to an Imperialist war, which the mill magnate had foresworn to oppose, were thus not delayed fulfilment, he found the charge rather excessive and asked for and received a detailed bill as follows:—

		Rs.	a.	p.
For stroking the machinery				
with a hammer	0	2	8
For knowing where to stroke				
it	999	13	4
<hr/>				
Total	1,000	0	0	0

Other people's thoughts, put with requisite knowledge in their proper perspective will enable a perfect picture to be drawn.

The tone of this little work may be found to be occasionally flippant. It was Samuel

Johnson, who said that truth is a bitter pill which none of us can bear to swallow without gilding. It may be that this assumed levity is a sugar-coating, under which much of the bitter stuff may be the more readily consumed.

It is customary in works, much bigger and much smaller than this to convey thanks to persons and institutions, named and or unnamed, for the help and advice, co-operation and guidance etc. etc., extended to the authors. One may not be thought presumptuous for departing from this time-honoured usage, except to thank Mr. Yusuf Meherally for his kind Foreword. It is necessary to do this in the interests of truth and non-violence to truth

BOMBAY :
Vasant, 1945.

M. J. G.

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I

PRE-BRITISH PERIOD

Shadow or substance? Sham or sound? Mirage or manifest? Fake or fact? Which ones in these opposite pairs give a true perspective of the communal problem in India? Or is it too complex to be dismissed by either one-sided denunciation or to be despaired of by the other-sided acceptance? Or as usually happens, does the truth lie somewhere midway between the two extremes as a shadowy fact or a sound mirage? For a proper appreciation of these questions, it is necessary to get down to the brass tacks of history and psychology, without wasting breath on mere rhetoric or hysterics!

Did a communal problem exist before the British established their rule in India?

"The British should be ashamed of twitting us about our religious differences, for, at a time, when the utmost religious toleration prevailed in India, under the Moghal rulers,¹ religious persecution to the extent of burning alive those with whom the king and his intimate circle differed, was the rule in Britain".¹

¹Sgt. Subhas Chandra Bose, in a public speech in Bombay in 1939.

These memorable words of Subhas Babu give us the gist of the conditions extant in India in the pre-British period. It is needless to go far back to a time of peaceful settlement of the Arabs in the South of India as traders. But it is noteworthy that Marco Polo describes Taqui-ud-din as the minister and adviser of king Sundar Pandya and the son and grandson of the former continued to hold the same position. A Muslim went as the Pandya Ambassador to Kublai Khan in 1286, and when the Muslim invaders descended on these regions, the Indian Muslims fought side by side with the Hindus, just as Germans settled in America have been fighting the Nazi with as much zeal as other Americans.

— Another noticeable fact about the Muslim invasion of India was that the wars in India were in fact dynastic, not religious. "Mahmud (of Ghazni) was swayed more by military zeal and sordid avarice than iconoclastic fury. He plundered India it is true. But he ransacked with equal enthusiasm the Muslim kingdoms of Iran and Trans-Oxania. Mahomed's love of plunder left behind it a tradition of terror amongst the Muslim kings themselves. Religion was not his *forte*, for he plundered both infidel and true believer with equal ardour".²

Babar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, fought a Muslim opponent in the person of

¹ A. Chakrabarti, *Hindus and Mussulmans of India*, p. 70-1. Also Cyril Modak's *India's Destiny*, a brilliant study of the process of national integration.

Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat, who had the support and help of the Hindus.

Whether in war or in peace, Hindus served freely in the armies and the Governments of the Muslim rulers and the Muslims did likewise in the service of the Hindu kings. Thus, from the time of Sultan Mahomed of Ghazni, Hindu Commanders and troops fought for Muslims. In fact, General Tilak suppressed the rebellion of Mahomed's Muslim general Niyaltigin. Mahomed Ghori made friends with the Raja of Jammu against Khusrav Malik, the last of the Ghaznavides at Lahore. Ghori had his stamps coined with a Hindu legend. Particularly significant is Tamerlane the Tartar's reference to Indian Muslims as "those who called themselves Mussulmans but who had strayed from the Mohammedan fold". Akbar in his contest for the crown had to fight the Afghan Sher Shah, who had a Hindu general. Not only had Akbar Hindu commanders but so also had Aurangzeb. The latter's extreme solicitude for Moghal interests coloured his action with a communal bias. But he fought the Afghans on the frontier at the same time as the Rajputs. He fought against Bijapur and Golkunda, which were Muslim, with as much ardour as against the Mahrathas. Shivaji fought for the Muslim Queen of Bijapur against the Moghals, Aurangzeb, whenever he had to write to Shivaji addressed him as "Multi-ul-Islam" that is, one favourable to Islam.

Shivaji also had in his employ, a number of Muslim military officers like Siddi Hullal

and Nur Khan. On the administrative side, Todar Mal's name is a household word. Even Aurangzeb's finance minister was a Hindu.

Religious toleration was the rule rather than the exception in India. That is why, thirteen hundred years ago, the small band of the followers of Zoroaster, driven away from their native land by the fanatical Arabs, sought and found a home in India. In Vijayanagar State, though it was at war with the neighbouring Muslim States, there was no religious persecution and the Adilsahi Sultans freely patronised Maratha chiefs. The Moghal toleration has been referred to and oft quoted.

There was also cultural blending. The Muslim invaders settled down in the country and became one with the original inhabitants. The Hindu learnt Persian and the Muslim mastered Sanskrit. Prince Dara, eldest son of the illustrious Shah Jahan, translated the Upanishads into Persian. Under his patronage, the Bhagwadgita and the Yoga Vasistha were likewise translated into Persian. Kabir and Nanak, Tukaram and Chaitanya are names to conjure with. To this day, a considerable blending of religious customs is observable.

Even in the matter of architecture, the blending of Hindu and Muslim trends is unmistakably noticeable. "The style evolved for Islamic buildings in Gujarat is the product of the impact of two equally vital traditions namely, those of the indigenous mediæval architecture and of that which had already erected the

Qutb Minar,—” says Mr. Moneer of the Archaeological Survey of India. ^{perhaps} ^{im-} ^{be}

It is needless to pursue this point further. Sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that the Muslims and the Hindus dwelt through the ages of the pre-British period in peace and harmony, with one another save, where lust of conquest of Rajahs and Sultans caused wars on the same pattern as those in Europe, without alignments on any religious lines.

Why, then under British rule should the communal question have assumed such proportions? To answer this, it is necessary to examine briefly the character of this foreign rule. A few words of the Grand Old Man of India aptly describe it. “In the case of former foreign conquests, the invaders either returned with their plunder and booty or became the rulers of the country. When they only plundered and went back they made no doubt great wounds, but India with her industry, revived and healed the wounds. When the invaders became the rulers of the country, they settled down in it, and whatever was the condition of their rule, according to the character of the sovereign of the day, there was at least no material or moral drain in the country. Whatever the country produced remained in the country, whatever wisdom and experience was acquired in her services remained among her own people. With the English the case is peculiar. The former rulers were like butchers hacking here and there, but the English with

scientific scalpel, cut to the very heart and yet lo ! there is no wound to be seen and even the plaster of the high talk of civilisation, 'progress and what not, covers up the wound !''^a

A fortiori, although Dadabhai makes out from this the disastrous economic consequences of the foreign rule, from its very mode of exercising power, it had to see that the elements on which it held sway were not united but a counterpoise of these elements was maintained. As the Muslim rulers of old, whenever they wanted to rule, stayed with the conquered and made India their own home, they had no need to encourage fissiparous tendencies in the country, which became their motherland. With the British it is easy to see that it had to be different,—and must continue to be so.

At one time the direct incitement to these dissensions among the different communities, necessary to be given by the British for the maintenance of their rule, was not only quite obvious but even openly admitted. As time passed, and such conduct came for review at the bar of world opinion, the mode of operations has perhaps become subtler, but the spread of the poison has to continue unchecked ! We shall attempt to see that those responsible for this tendency, as far as possible, are condemned out of their own mouths. No less a man than

^aDadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, p. 211-2, Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India.

Mountstuart Elphinstone said, even perhaps when it was not quite necessary, "*Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto and it should be ours." Let it be said to the credit of his countrymen, that, to this day, they have faithfully stuck to this motto.

II

1857 AND AFTER

The starting point of communal favouritism is linked up with the Indian Rebellion of 1857, sometimes called the first War of Indian Independence. This unsuccessful attempt taught the British two lessons: one military, the other administrative, but both based, of course, on setting up one community against the other. "In the ranks of the regular army (of the pre—1857 days), men stood mixed up as chance might befall. There was no separating by class or clan. In the lines, Hindu and Mahomedan, Sikh and Poorbeah were mixed up, so that each and all lost to some extent their racial prejudice and became inspired with one common sentiment."⁴ (*Italics are ours*).

Lord Lawrence, who became the Viceroy of India, after the rebellion was quelled, said, "Among the defects of the pre-Mutiny army, unquestionably the worst, and the one that operated most fatally against us was the bro-

⁴ Lovett and Macmunn, *The Armies of India*, p. 94-5.

therhood and the homogeneity of the Bengal army, and for this purpose, *the remedy is counterpoise*; firstly the great counterpoise of the Europeans, and secondly of the native races." (Italics are ours).

Now let us hear what an authority of the repute of Sir John Seeley has to say: "You see, the Mutiny was in a great measure put down by turning the races of India against each other. So long as this can be done, and so long as the population have not formed the habit of criticising their Government, whatever it be and of rebelling against it, the Government of India from England is possible, and there is nothing miraculous about it. But, as I said, *if the state of things should alter, if by any chance, the population should be welded into a single nationality, then, I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion. I say we ought to cease at once to hope for it.*"⁵ (Italics are ours).

Ending up the military consequences and lessons of the 1857 Rebellion, we find that the composition of the army was thereafter altered. "It is nearly grouped into battalions, companies, squadrons and sometimes even platoons of specified classes (based on tribal, sectarian and caste distinctions) according to a fixed ratio and no one who does not belong to one of these is allowed to enter the army, simply because he is individually fit. These groups are so arranged that they retain their tribal or com-

⁵Sir John Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, p. 270.

munal loyalties and at the same time balance the characteristics and influences of one another."⁶

Perhaps the cataclysm that is the war of 1939 may have led the rulers of India to relax the rule a bit and "mercenaries" (Mr. William Phillips' description), miscalled volunteers from all sections may have temporarily crept into the army, and very probably found an early grave in Assam or Burma, Italy or Africa.

Let us now turn to discuss the administrative effect of the Rebellion. It is true that Hindu and Muslim alike participated in it. "In ill-discipline, bitterness of feeling against their masters, and confidence in their power to overthrow them, there was nothing to choose between Hindu or Mussalman,"⁷ but the Government somehow or other believed, as stated by Sir John Kaye that "undoubtedly the prime movers in the rebellion and those who most zealously fanned its sparks into flame, were Mussalmans." This was perhaps because the British felt that they were stepping into the shoes of a Mohammedan power. "It is a fact, well worthy of notice, that the sovereign power in India on our arrival there was Sunni, for with the single exception of the sepóys, the only men who have disturbed the internal peace of our Eastern Empire have been men belonging to a sect of Sunnis."⁸ So also,

⁶N. C. Chowdhry, *The Defence of India*.

⁷Colonel Chesney, *Indian Polity*.

⁸H. C. Bowen, *Mohammedans in India*. (1873), p. 13.

Lord Ellenborough "cannot close his eyes to the belief that the race (of Muslims) is fundamentally hostile to us, and therefore our true policy is to conciliate the Hindus."

"I must deprecate that whole denunciation against Mohammedans as a race, in which the newspapers are won't to indulge, and which stains the pages of those who have written upon the events of 1857....During and for long after the Mutiny the Mohammedans were under a cloud. To them were attributed all the horrors and calamities of the terrible crime."⁹

What is the result? "Let Major Basu speak for us: "Thus we find that the partisans of the British were almost all Hindus or proteges of the Hindus."¹⁰ In the Bengal, already the Permanent Settlement had dealt a crushing blow to the Muslims. After the Rebellion of 1857, in Bengal and later, all over the country, the Muslims were not allowed to join the army, a profession after their own heart. Sir W. W. Hunter has well gauged Muslim feeling, at this time: "There is no use shutting our ears to the fact that the Indian Mohammedans arraign us on a list of charges, as have ever been brought against a Government. They accuse us of having closed every walk of life to professors of their creed. They

⁹Syed Ahmed Khan, *Loyal Mohammedans in India*.

¹⁰Major Basu, *Rise of the Christian Power in India*, Vol. I.

accuse us of having introduced a system of education which leaves their whole community unprovided for, and which has landed it in contempt and beggary. Above all they charge us with deliberate malversation of their religious foundations; and with misappropriation on the largest scale of their educational funds. In a word, the Indian Mussulman arraigns the British Government for its want of sympathy, for its want of magnanimity, for the mean malversation of their funds, and for great public wrongs spread over a period of one hundred years. In fact there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Mohammedan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of ink pots and mender of pens¹¹. Is it possible that the British rulers feel that they have now made ample amends by classing Muslims as a backward community and their advertising this fact in advertisements for petty posts in Government offices, and even reserving some of those posts for them?

It has also to be remarked that this nascent foreign rule had need of natives in order to consolidate itself. It needed that class of "the natives" that could adjust itself to this new domination, help it in civil administration and speak and understand its language. It is well-known that the numerically very small minority of the Parsis took full advant-

¹¹Dr. Hunter, *Indian Mussulmans*.

age of the situation, but this community could help the foreigner only in a small part of Gujarat in the Bombay Province. But all over India, the Hindu, with his aptitude for civil administration, for which he was known also under the Moghals, came very handy to the British. Naturally, this section of the Hindus also profitted by the contact, doubtless at the cost of the masses, both Hindu and Muslim alike. But this contact had another unexpected result. English education meant an acquaintance, not only with the British "Bania" with his pounds, shillings and pence but with the love of liberty of Chatham and Burke, Pitt and Fox and many others. Thus, it came about that the Indian National Congress (founded 1885), in which this type of Indians, Hindus, Parsis and even Muslims took *prominent part, became critical of Government intentions and policies.*

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was now over thirty years old and the bitterness engendered by it was forgotten. The time had come to placate the Muslims, as a community and win them over to the foreign rule, of which the other community was now becoming critical. So, one finds the Indian Council Act of 1892 providing for separate Muslim representation. The Act provided for nomination by the Government of representatives of various "interest" to the Council, so that these interests may have the opportunity of presenting their views in person. The Muslims became one such "interest," to whose views the Government was

prepared to give an attentive ear. It is significant that no elective power was conferred. The actual selection of the different representatives vested, of course, with the Governor-General.

About this time was founded the Aligarh College for Muslims. One Mr. Beck was its Principal, and this young Englishman played a no mean part in diverting Muslim thought in the direction of the rulers, and to wean away the Muslims from the path of nationalism. He it was who set by the ears Sir Syed Ahmed, till then a staunch nationalist, and the Bengalies. In 1889, when Mr. Bradlaugh introduced a bill in Parliament for conferring democratic institutions in India, Mr. Beck prepared a memorial on behalf of Indian Muslims opposing this bill, on the plea, since repeated, that democratic institutions were unsuited to India, which was not one single nation. In December 1893, a purely Muslim organisation, the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India was formed. Of course, the Englishman Beck was its Secretary, its objects being not only to support measures that would strengthen British rule in India, to spread feelings of loyalty among the people and to prevent the spread of political agitation among the Muslims, but also to protect the political rights of the Muslims : Some of Mr. Beck's writings are significant : "The past few years have witnessed the growth of two agitations in this country : one, the Indian National Congress, the other, the movement against cow-slaughter.

The former is directed against the English, the latter against the Muslims. The objective of the Congress is to transfer the political control of the country from the British to the Hindus.... Mussulmans can have no sympathy with these demands. It is imperative for the Muslims and the British to unite with a view to fighting these agitators and prevent the introduction of democratic form of Government, unsuited as it is to the needs and genius of the country." Who will deny that the post—1936 Mr. Jinnah has become an adept pupil of these early Britons.

III

MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS

The stage was now set for what Maulana Mahomed Ali described as a command performance at the time of the Morley-Minto Reforms. Mr. Archibold was a most able successor of Mr. Beck in the office of the Principal of the Aligarh College, when the constitutional changes that finally took shape in the Morley-Minto Reforms were in the offing. Let the great Mr. Archibold himself do the talking,—there will then be no need for any comment. In a letter to Nawab Mohsil-ul-Mulk, on 10th August, 1906, he wrote, "Colonel Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary of His Excellency the Viceroy, informs me that His Excellency is agreeable to receive the deputation. He advises that a formal letter, requesting a permission to wait on His Excellency be sent to him. In this connection, I would like to make a few

suggestions. The formal letter should be sent with the signature of some representative Muslims. The deputation should consist of the representatives of all the provinces. The third point to be considered is the text of the address. *I would here suggest that we begin with a solemn expression of loyalty.* The Government decision to take a step in the direction of self-government should be appreciated. But our apprehension should be expressed that *the principle of election, if introduced would prove detrimental to the interest of the Muslim minority.* It should respectfully be suggested that nomination or representation by religion be introduced to meet Muslim opinion. We should also say that in a country like India, due weight must be given to the views of the Zamindars. But in all these views, I must be in the background. They must come from you. I can prepare for you the draft of the address or revise it. If it is prepared in Bombay, I can go through it." (The italics are ours, but the "wes" and "ours" are significant).

It was Smith Minor, who said that the Ten Commandments are no good, they just put ideas into your head. It was left to the Becks, and Archibalds of Indian political history to thrust the idea of separate electorates into the minds of Muslims, and even to draft petitions on behalf of the Muslim community to the Viceroy,—it was "not yet the great Muslim nation." Accordingly, the deputation headed by the Agha Khan and carrying with it a petition drafted very probably by Archibald, waited on Lord Minto.

Before giving the Viceroy's reply, let us cull the more luscious portions of the letters exchanged between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India.

"I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes of an elaboration of that idea."¹²

"Everybody warns us that a new spirit is growing and spreading over India. Lawrence, Chirol, Sidney Low all sing the same song. You cannot go on governing in the same spirit; you have got to deal with the Congress party and Congress principles whatever you may think of them. Be sure that before long the Mohammedans will throw in their lot, with the Congressmen against you, and so on and so forth."¹³

"Nothing was ever truer than what Morrison says in the extract you send me. 'Ideas can only be combated by ideas; and you won't keep the younger generation (of Muslims) away from the Congress unless you have another programme and another set of ideas to set up against theirs.'¹⁴

We now give the Viceroy's reply, "comment will be superfluous, said Lord Minto."

"The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that under any system of representa-

¹²Letter, Minto to Morley, (May 28, 1906)

¹³Letter, Morley to Minto, (June 6, 1906)

¹⁴Letter, Minto to Morley, (July 11, 1906)

tion, whether it affects a municipality or a district board or legislative council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Mohammedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases, electoral bodies, as now constituted, cannot be expected to return a Mohammedan candidate and that if by chance they did so, it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's views to those of a majority opposed to his community, whom he would in no way represent, and you justly claim that your position should be estimated not only on your numerical strength but in respect to the political importance of your community and the service it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you. Please do not misunderstand me. I make no attempt to indicate by what means the representation of communities could be obtained but I am as firmly convinced, as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure, which aimed at granting a personal enfrenchisement, regardless of the beliefs and tradition of the communities composing the population of this continent."

"Thus originated", said Verney Lovett, "the concession to minorities of communal representation."

"I won't follow you again into our Mohammedan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was your early speech

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about their extra claims that first started the M. hare."¹⁵

Mark, too, what the youthful subaltern in the Indian army of 1890, and since 1940, the first Minister of His Majesty the King of England, and who may be classed with Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo as one of the greatest enemies of the freedom of humanity, has to say in 1910 to one Mr. Blunt: "If they (Indians) ever unite against us and put us into Coventry all round, the game would be up. If they agree to have nothing at all to do with us, the whole thing would collapse."

So, under the Reforms Act of 1909, separate electorates became a *fait accompli*. It is also significant to note how favourably the Muslims were treated. Their separate representation was in addition to their vote in the General constituencies. The franchise also was in their favour. To become a voter, the Muslim had to pay income-tax at Rs. 3,000/- a year, while non-Muslims on Rs. 300,000/- a year. For becoming a voter, a Muslim graduate needed only three years' standing as against thirty years of other graduates.

The *Statesman's* criticism of this measure stated: "Even more questionable than the efforts of the Government to aggrandise the landed interests is their courting of Moham-medan support. We view with grave concern the action of the Government in seeking one section of the people for differential treatment,

¹⁵Letter, Morley to Minto, (December 6, 1909).

such as is not tendered to any other portion." Even more trenchant was Mr. Ramsay Macdonald of *The Awakening of India*: "It embodied proposals so reactionary, so objectionable, so harmful to the country that no good word for it was said by any man worthy of mention anywhere in India. The Mohammedan leaders are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials, and these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice aforethought sowed discord between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities by showing the Muslim special favours." The Council of Princes, of which Lord Minto's letter spoke, came later!

IV

BETWEEN TWO REFORMS

In 1906, buoyed up by the success of the representation to Lord Minto, the deputationists started a separate communal organisation. This was the All-India Muslim League (founded on 30th December, 1906) with the objects of promoting among Indian Muslims feelings of loyalty for the British Government, protecting the political and other rights of the Indian Muslims and without prejudice to these objects, promoting friendly feelings between the Muslims and the other communities of India!

Since 1904, the question of the partition of Bengal had been mooted. The new province was sought to be advertised as a Muslim Province. Nawab Saleemullah Khan who was

opposed to partition was bought over by a loan of £100,000 advanced to him by the Government at a low rate of interest. However, when, under stress of circumstances the Partition of Bengal had to be abrogated in 1911, it was done without a reference to the Muslims. Such an attitude of complete indifference to the real interests of any section of the people, but of merely using a community for personal ends, or as a bar in the path of constitutional advance has throughout been a prominent land-mark of British policy in India. This was the first occasion, on which the Muslims felt its pinch.

The decade that followed marked the growing alignment of the Muslim intelligentsia with the nationalist forces. There were a number of contributory causes. The young Turk movement in Turkey had its repercussions on Muslim India. A number of members of the rising generation of Muslims identified themselves with the movement for the country's freedom. The names of Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, the Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stand out among the rest. The latter's *Al Hwal* and Maulana Mahomed Ali's *Comrade* and *Hamdard* helped in re-shaping Muslim opinion to this end. The Great War of 1914 found Muslims like Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan of Doyband, Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, Maulvi Aziz Gul conspiring with the Turks, then at war with Britain, against the latter. Followed the arrests of these leaders; the Ali Brothers and Maulanas Azad and Hasrat Mohani were also interned. At the 1915 sessions of the

Muslim League, leaders of the Congress like Gandhiji, Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Malaviya attended. (In 1944, the President of the Muslim League fought shy of Gandhiji addressing the Muslim League). The Agha Khan, at that time, more or less the permanent President of the League, like Mr. Jinnah of recent years, resigned, taking fright at this first bud of nationalism.

The Muslim League set up a committee to draft in consultation with the Congress, a scheme of reforms for India. This was pursuant to a resolution moved by Mr. Jinnah. Let us hear Mr. Jinnah of those days.

"Absurd political maxims have been propounded and hurled, time and again, at the Indian people. They are well-known to students of politics. It is said, for instance, that democratic institutions are unsuited to the genius of the East. Is democracy unknown to the Hindus and Muslims? Then what were the village *Panchayats*? What does the glorious past of Islam testify? No nation in the world can claim greater democratic spirit and traditions than the Muslims."

It will scarcely do to remind Mr. Jinnah of 1944 of these words, straight out of his own mouth.

The terms of the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Congress and the League are well-known. The Pact conceded increased weightage with separate electorates to Muslims, where they were in a minority in population or in voting strength. In return, the Congress and the

League joined in emphasising that in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted from the position of dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire, with the self-governing dominions. But this was too much for the foreigner, saddled in power over this helpless country. So, the Government of India, out of all the sympathy and solicitude for the Muslims of Bengal, visible even quite recently in the tragedy of the man-made famine of 1943-44, observed.

"The Mohammedan representation which the Pact proposes for Bengal is manifestly insufficient. It is questionable whether the claims of the Mohammedan population of Eastern Bengal were sufficiently pressed, when the Congress-League compact was in the making. They are a conspicuously backward and impoverished community. The re-partition of the presidency in 1912 came as a severe disappointment to them and we shall be very loath to fail in seeing that their interests are generously secured. In order to give the Bengal Muslims a representation proportionate to their numbers, and no more, we should allot to them 44 instead of 34 seats," (due to them under the Pact).

Was it, one wonders, to make up for all the ills, since the days of the Permanent Settlement, heaped on the Muslims of Bengal, to some of which reference has already been made, that, in a spirit of contribution, this generous offer of more seats (but not, more nourishment or food for one of the most poorly nou-

rished provinces of India) was made, or was it just another Machiavollian move to disrupt Indian solidarity ? It is known that the Muslim peasants of Bengal are not only impoverished ; they go famished. The peasantry pays seventeen crores of rupees to the Zamindars ; less than one-fourth of this amount goes into the Government Treasury, thanks to the Permanent Settlement. Does the increased weightage in legislative seats make up for the life-blood sucked out of a poverty-ridden peasantry.

V

THE REFORMS ACT OF 1919,— AND AFTER

A Committee of the Council of the Secretary of State admitted in 1860 that the British domination in India had been exposed to the charge of keeping promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope. Lord Lytton, some time later, improved on this phrase with the words, "breaking to the heart, the word of promise they had uttered to the ear," in reference to the same foreign rule. Nearly sixty years later, in 1918, Mr. Montague and Lord Chelmsford in their Report disapproved of communal electorates. However "so far as the Mohammedans at all events are concerned, the present system must be maintained until conditions alter, even at the price of slower progress towards the realization of a common citizenship. *But we can see no reason to set up communal representa-*

tion in any province where they form a majority of voters."¹⁶ (The italics are ours, and comprise the word of promise they had uttered to the ear, as Lord Lytton had said). This word of promise was broken to the heart, when this very report gave separate electorates to the Sikhs and agreed to communal representation to Muslims in the Punjab, where they were in a majority. In 1909, (Morley-Minto Reforms) the electorate was split up into four communal and class electorates, nine years later, there were ten, seventeen years more (1935), they became seventeen, but that story is still to be told.

A glance at Mr. Montague's *Indian Diary* shows that he wanted "a new organisation of Indians to be collected, assisted in every possible way by the Government, for propaganda on behalf of our proposals and to send a delegation to England to assist us." Thus was born the Justice Party in Madras. Its latest stunt is Dravidistan. No wonder! Let Mr. C. Y. Chintamani describe its origin. Sir Alexander Cardew, "who was so prominent in the Government of Madras in these years," was giving evidence before the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill of 1919. "Sir Alexander having emphatically denied that the Government of Madras had at any time done anything to stimulate the growth of the Justice Party, Lord Sinha confronted him with a passage in an official resolution, which bore the

¹⁶Montague, Chelmsford Report, p. 271.

signature, 'A. C. Cardew,' with the result that the witness had to look small and give up his assertiveness."¹⁷ Also, Sjt. Subhas Babu said: "When the Government of India Act 1919 was under consideration, the late Dr. T. M. Nair of Madras was made a leader in London in opposition to the Congress leaders of the time."¹⁸

But, Mr. Montague, with his tongue in his cheek, had to write in his *Indian Diary*, "What strikes me as so astounding about these non-Brahmans in that although they are vigorous enough to object to the influence of the Brahmins, they lie on their stomachs and appeal to the Government for help instead of fighting."¹⁹

"And the result was," the Deshbandhu said, "When the non-Brahmanical cause had all but triumphed and the non-Brahmin party was in a majority, the cause of the nation was absolutely forgotten in the quests of posts and the loaves and fishes of office."²⁰ So, to the Hindu-Muslim problem was added the Dravidian-Aryan question.

Due to extraneous causes, such as the Khilafat issue, and to inland circumstances, such as the Jallianwala Bagh atrocity, the cohesion

¹⁷C. Y. Chintamani, *Indian Politics since the Mutiny*, p. 177-8.

¹⁸S. O. Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, p. 41.

¹⁹F. S. Montague, *An Indian Diary*, p. 118.

²⁰C. R. Das, *The Way to Swaraj*, p. 49.

of the intelligentsia of the two big communities continued unimpaired. Like Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India in 1943, whose heart on assuming the reigns of office, was both afflicted and affected by the economic *malaise* of the country and who therefore made a discovery of so many economic issues, needing solution that he could not but forget the country's leaders, rotting in detention, Lord Chelmsford and then Lord Reading also re-called Nelson's blind eye, though not having the good fortune of the other in actually having one such, and metaphorically borrowing it, turned it on the political situation in India and tried to make good the lacuna thus caused by appointing scores of Commissions and Committees, on all phases of Indian economic life. It is said that Virgil had expressed a wish that his works should be burnt after his death; Smith Minor has ever been sorry that Virgil's wishes were not respected. Countless students of Indian Economics have since the twenties been in a similar frame of mind as Smith Minor, their contemporary and colleague from Great Britain. The only result of the Reports of the twenty or more commissions on Railways, Agriculture, Banking, Finance, Taxation, Currency, Labour, Roads etc. has been to add to the burden of the student of Indian economics, as, for all practical purposes, the reports of all these enquiries had no tangible effect whatever.

It was in the twenties that the Hindu Mahasabha attracted notice, and in what manner? The first important sessions, presided

over by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was held in 1923 at Benares. In December 1924, it met at Belgaum. Just as the Congress leaders had earlier attended the Muslim League sessions, so they were present at the Hindu Mahasabha sessions of 1924. Among these were the Ali Brothers, Dr. Mahmood, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Pandit Malaviya presided over this session also. Let him explain the aims and objects of this organization, as he then understood them. "The necessity for organising the Mahasabha had arisen, because the Congress, being a political body, could not deal with questions, which affected various communities in *social and other non-political spheres*." (The italics are of course ours.) But the Mahasabha, too, was "keeping promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope." At this very sessions, one of the resolutions stated that the Sabha "would also focus and express Hindu opinion on political problems." So Sir P. C. Roy, the noted Scientist, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the next session of the Hindu Mahasabha, advised it "to confine its activities to the reform of internal abuses and to the consolidation of the different sections and castes of the Hindu Community," and Lala Lajpat Rai, in his presidential address also insisted that the Hindu Sabhas should make no encroachment on the province of the Congress, except so far as purely communal questions are concerned." In spite of these warnings, however, when the Swaraj Party was formed within the Congress, the Mahasabha, at its Delhi Session.

resolved in favour of Council entry and "to take all proper steps, which include running of its own candidates, when necessary, to safeguard Hindu interests." Of course, Pandit Motilal Nehru protested against such a policy, which was such a marked departure from its real aims and objects, but to no avail. The revered Panditji's analysis of this move applies with equal force to other communal organizations like the Muslim League, as also to candidates of other minority communities, like the Sikh and the Parsi, angling for support from their co-religionists: "The eligibility of candidates for elections is not to be judged by their political convictions, but by degree of solicitude they show to protect communal interests. It is obvious that an extreme non-co-operating congress-man may have it in the same degree as an ultra-loyalist." However, it is the latter, who has need to stand for election under communal colours. *En Passant*, it is pertinent to refer to the election propaganda on behalf of Sir Jehangir Bomanbham, a Parsi candidate for the Bombay Legislative Assembly, in the 1937 elections, as against the Congress candidates, and particularly Mr. K. F. Nariman, also a Parsi who stood on the Congress ticket. It completely bore out the truth of Pandit Motilal Nehru's words.

VI

PREPARATIONS FOR THE LAST DOSE

The lull after the hectic days of 1919, 1920 and 1921 lasted till 1927. There was widespread dissatisfaction with dyarchy, adumbrated by the Montford Reforms, under which, as Sir K. V. Reddi, so piteously admitted: "I am a Minister of Development minus Forests,—I am Minister of Industries without factories, which are a reserved subject, and industries without factories, are unimaginable. I am Minister of Agriculture minus Irrigation. I am also Minister of Industry without electricity, which is also a reserved subject and more anomalies in the same strain existed." The foreign rulers felt that something had to be done to show the world that the political question in India was not to be indefinitely shelved. The appointment of the All-White "Simon-go-back" Commission once again galvanised political India into activity. Its reverberations on Muslim politics were marked. The reactionary element in the Muslim League wanted to welcome this Commission and the Nationalist section opposed this move. In the result, two rival sessions of the League were held. The rump sessions in Lahore, with Sir Firoz Khan Noon, for some time India's Government-nominated representative on the British War Cabinet of 1943 and Sir Mahomed Shafee as prominent attendants, and the other and real sessions at Calcutta, with Mr. Jinnah as the President. The latter resolved to boycott

the Simon Commission, and had a Committee appointed that would take up with the Congress and other political organisations the work of drafting the constitution and of suggesting necessary safeguards.

An all parties Conference appointed a Committee to frame a report on a constitution for India. The result was the Nehru Report of 1928. It is hardly necessary to deal with it in any detail. The Muslim League rejected it *in toto*, while the Nationalist elements in the League, who were opposed by an alliance of the rump sessions of 1927 at Lahore and a part of the delegates that attended the Calcutta Sessions, wanted it accepted with some modifications.

To add insult to injury, the League Sessions of March 1929 was adjourned *sine die* by the President, Mr. Jinnah. The Nationalist Muslims, thereupon resigned from the League and formed the Nationalist Muslim Party.

The boycott of the Simon Commission was, however, not affected by this League schism. The cry of 'Simon-go-back' reverberated from one end of India to the other, lengthwise and breadthwise, but, Sir John Simon, as he then was, and his Commission, proceeded according to plan with their operations and there was no withdrawal, except, of course, also according to plan, at the end of their labours. His plan of campaign, proved unsuccessful, although it was stretched out for him by the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead. It is revealing; it is one

more contribution, from the foreigner to the Hindu-Muslim tension. "I should advise Simon", said Lord Birkenhead, "to see at all stages all people who are not boycotting the Commission, particularly Muslims and depressed classes. I should widely advertise all his interviews with representative Muslims. The whole policy is now obvious. It is to terrify the immense Hindu population, by the apprehension that the Commission is being got hold of by the Muslims, and may present a report, altogether destructive of the Hindu position, thereby securing solid Muslim support and leaving Mr. Jinnah high and dry." Poor Mr. Jinnah! Mr. William Phillips, personal representative in India of President Roosevelt of the U. S. A., has not been the only one to be *persona non-grata* with the British bureaucratic hierarchy. Some consolation this for Mr. Phillips! He shares this honour with Mr. Jinnah of 1928.

The Congress, after its ultimatum of December 1929, launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in April 1930 with the famous Dandi March of Gandhiji. The fiasco of the First Round Table Conference was gone through, but India and the national and non-violent movement started by the Congress continued unchecked, probably because Nazism had not seen the light of day, as yet, in Europe, and Niza methods could not, then, be imitated! In March 1931, the Government in India came to terms with the Congress. It is pertinent to make mention of what has become, known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, because, once more, the

British Government chose to act without reference to Muslims or to Muslim interests. It has already been emphasised above how, at the time of the rendition of the Partition of Bengal, the Muslim opinion was left high and dry and the tall talk of guardians and saviours of minority interests melted into thin air, as it suited the foreign power. Otherwise, the Pact was barren of results, and gave breathing space to the foreigner to muster his strength for crushing a recrudescence of the national movement.

The Muslims had played no mean part in the struggle of 1930-31, and the Nationalist Muslims met in conference at Lucknow in 1931 after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The sentiments, expressed by Sir Ali Imam, the President, are worth noting. After admitting his past allegiance to separate electorates, he said that in the interval between 1905 and 1909, he had time to give careful consideration to the subject and realised that separate electorates were harmful to the Muslims themselves. "If I were asked, why I have such abiding faith in Indian Nationalism, my answer is that without that, India's freedom is an impossibility. Separate electorates connate negation of nationalism. As the President elect of the Conference, have been flooded with messages from every corner of India from different leaders, who one and all insist on the basic principle of joint electorates."

Even Gandhiji's participation in the Second Round Table Conference had no tangible results, satisfactory to Indian aspirations. Be-

fore even Gandhiji came back to India, repression was rampant and failing to get an interview with the New Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, he had to launch on the second civil disobedience movement, and Congress was again illegal and in the wilderness.

A group of children was to give an original drama of Robinson Crusoe, written by one of themselves. In the last scene, Crusoe comes back and greets his wife, and saying that he has not been idle during the long separation, shows her the man Friday and all the treasures he has brought from the island. Mrs. Crusoe goes into the house and coming back with some seven others following her, says to her husband, "My dear, I too, have not been idle, here are all our children." The British too, had not been idle, during the early thirties, though, after the Montford Reforms, their contribution had been rather slack. But in 1932, Mr. Coatman, C.I.E., came out, like Mrs. Crusoe of the child's making, with the astounding statement: "The creation of a strong, united India, including the whole of British India and the Indian States and the borderland in the North-West, whose inclusion in India is one of the first and most fundamental conditions of her nationhood, is, day by day, being made impossible, and in its place, it seems that there may be brought into being a powerful Mohammedan State in the north and north-west, with its eyes definitely turned away from India, towards the rest of the Muslim world of which it forms the fringe, whilst away to the south and east, there will be what? A Hindu India,

homogeneous and united? Perhaps! Or a vast area divided between warring princes and the fighting races of old Hindustan as it has been in the past and may easily be so again in the future? Very likely!"²¹ What wishful thinking! And, of course, to these Pakistan-children, self-procreated by Mrs. Crusoe-Coatman, it remained for Mr. Jinnah-Crusoe only to adopt in 1940 some Eastern parts of India.

In August 1932, the British Government formulated a Communal Award. In the provinces with a clear Hindu majority, the Award gave to Muslims weightage. In the Punjab, the Muslims, with fifty-seven per cent of the population, were given forty-nine per cent of the seats, and the Sikhs whose population was thirteen per cent were awarded eighteen per cent of the seats. In Bengal, the Muslims who claimed a population of fifty-five per cent got forty-seven and a half per cent representation, while the European community, a microscopic minority of one in ten thousand, got twenty-five seats or ten per cent representation. It is not so much the terms of the award that are important, as the declared intention of the British Government to withdraw this award, if an agreement was reached between the Indians themselves. It is interesting and instructive to watch the sequel. Pandit Malaviya convened a representative Conference at Allahabad to attempt to arrive at an agreed solution. Settlement was reached on thirty-two per cent of representation for Muslims in the

²¹J. Coatman, *Years of Destiny*, p. 238-40

Central Legislature and for the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency, with concessions to the Hindu minority in the province, with the added proviso that the proposed new province of Sind should not receive any grant from the Central revenues. Settlement regarding the proportionate representation in Bengal from the two communities was made difficult by the excessive weightage of over twenty-five thousand per cent given to the Europeans in the Communal Award. The Committee of the Malaviya Conference proceeded to Calcutta to find an agreed solution on the spot. At this moment, Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India, who had boasted that his caravan of reform would move on, in spite of the barking of the dogs,—language quite in keeping with British traditions of justice and fair play,—made an important announcement at the Third Round Table Conference, which was then in session. He stated that the British Government would give one-third of the seats in the Central Legislature to the Muslims. Sind would not only be made a separate province but would be given financial aid from the central revenues, and of course, there was no mention of safeguards for the Hindu minority in Sind !

It will be recalled how at the time of the Lucknow Pact, the British Government intervened to give more seats to the Muslims. The same tactics were adopted, when unity on legislative representation was in sight in 1932. Is it very much to be surprised at, if the Congress leaders have asserted, time and again, that the

settlement of the communal problem is impossible, while the foreign power dominates over India !

Regarding the Communal award of the British Government, it remains to add that disruption and schism between caste Hindus and Harijans, which were so graciously provided for by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, author of the *Awakening of India* in 1910, twenty-two years later, were thwarted by the epic fast of Mahatma Gandhi, which compelled the British to amend the award, so far as the Harijans were concerned !

VII

1935,—AND THEN !

The Government of India Act of 1935 became law. As has been previously stated, further fragmentation of the electorate into seventeen unequal parts, from ten in 1919, took place. Separate electorates were thrust upon women and Indian Christians. Divisions on the basis of religion, occupation and sex were made, every kind of cross-division was introduced. By the new Act, Muslims were given a statutory majority, weightage and also separate electorates in provinces, where they were in a majority ! By the introduction of Second Chambers, with very high property franchise, nationalist and mass control was sought to be checked. It remains only to add, as Mr. Krishna says in *The Problem of Minorities*, that the Government might even declare "eunuchs and

concubines" to be minorities, particularly the latter, as, one might suggest, they have a status of their own in Hindu law !

Regarding the part of Act, dealing with Federation, it is hardly necessary to deal, since it has remained a dead letter, except in the matter of the establishment of the Federal Court. One or two points may, however, be stressed. The Princes were induced to join the Federation, and to nominate members of the Lower and Upper Houses of the Federation. Less than seven hundred of these marionnettes had one-third of the voting strength in the former and two-fifths in the other House ! The people of the states of course, went unrepresented, save in so far as they could be said to be represented by these remnants of feudalism, still extant in India ! The seeds sown by Lord Minto in 1906 were bearing fruit.

There is no need to dwell further on this piece of legislation except to stress one strange contrast. In 1919, the Montague-Chelmsford Report, expressing itself against separate electorates, felt the need of accepting them, because the Congress and Muslim League had agreed to them. Fifteen years later, separate electorates had to be continued, nay even extended, for precisely the contrary reason than in 1918,—because there was no agreement between the two major communities. It was thus a case of heads I win, tails you lose, so far as the foreign ruler was concerned ! But the beauty of the whole affair is that in spite of pursuing

such a policy of *divide et impera*, by now, the British had grown sufficiently wary to make protestations, quite in contrast with the policy they were pursuing. Who could find fault with what the Prime Minister, Mr. Macdonald said in the Commons : "If every constituency is to be ear-marked as to community or interest, there will be no room left for the growth of what we consider to be purely political organisations, which would comprehend all communities, all creeds, all classes, all conditions of faith. This is one of the problems, which has to be faced, because, if India is going to develop a robust political life, there must be room for national political parties, based upon conceptions of India's interests and not upon conceptions regarding the well being of any field that is smaller or less comprehensive than the whole of India." One is not certain, whether one would rather prefer to this hypocritical, suave-tongued, patronising adumbration, the plain, positive and callous outburst of his successor, two decades later, an avowed enemy of Indian freedom, who was emphatic, about the same time, that the half-naked FAKIR and all that he stands for, (which is the biggest political party in the country) will have, sooner or later, to be utterly crushed."

In the first, and so far, the only general elections in the provinces in 1937, under the new constitution, the Congress swept the polls. Before dwelling on the results of the Elections, so far as the Muslim League was concerned, let

THIRTY-EIGHT]

us consider the action pledges, given by this communal organisation in its manifesto.

"The main principles on which we expect our representatives in various Legislatures to work will be (1) that the present provincial constitution and the proposed central constitution should be replaced immediately by DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNMENT, (2) and that, in the meantime representations of the Muslim League in the various Legislatures will utilise the Legislatures in order to extract the maximum benefit out of the constitution, for the benefit of the people in the various spheres of national life. The Muslim League Party must be formed as a corollary SO LONG AS SEPARATE ELECTORATES EXIST, but there would be free co-operation with any groups, whose aims and ideals are approximately the same as those of the League party." (*Italics are ours.*)

The strength of the Muslim League, as compared with other Muslim Groups, in the various provincial assemblies, was just over twenty-two per cent of the total number of Muslim candidates, 77 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent going to the other Muslims. Under the existing Constitution, 480 seats are reserved for Muslims out of a total of 1581 in all the eleven provincial Legislative Assemblies in British India. But of these 480 seats, the Muslim League has been able to secure only 104 seats, representing 4.6 per cent of the total Muslim Voters (total Muslim Voters, 7,319,445, Muslim League Votes 321,772).²²

²²R. Palme-Dutt, INDIA TODAY, p. 420.

After some hesitation, the Congress resolved to accept office. Prof. Humayun Kabir, in his brochure, MUSLIM POLITICS, attributes the growth of the influence of the Muslim League among the Muslims to this hesitancy. This opinion is quoted for whatever it is worth, although coming from one of the acumen of Mr. Kabir, it deserves consideration.

One of the charges levelled against the rule of the Congress Ministries in the seven or eight provinces where it was in power, is that it acted on the purely party system and refused to form coalition Governments with other parties and specially with the Muslim League. In this connection, it is interesting to note a few opinions. In 1934, the Raja of Bobbili, a leader of the Justice Party, opined against coalition Governments in his Presidential address of the South Indian Liberal Conference. He said, "In the interests of our country, I desire that you should realise the implications of provincial autonomy and how it should be worked. I think it would be most unfortunate, if, instead of a clear-cut party system, opportunities were available for the formation of a ministry under a group system. Whether we are in power or in opposition, it would be against national interests to encourage or any way countenance the group system, which will work greater havoc than even dyarchy." Perhaps after the election results were out in Madras and the Justice Party practically wiped out of the picture, the Raja may have seen reason to change his views! But that is

another story. Let us also hear Comrade Stalin's views on Coalition Governments. In his report of 30th July, 1917 to the Fifth Congress Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, he said: "The mass movement resulted in a coalition Government. As experience had shown, the principle of coalition was the surest weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the purpose of drugging the masses and continuing to lead them. The moment the coalition Government was formed, the counter-revolutionary began to mobilise from top to bottom."

An extract from a Madras Government Despatch regarding the alignment of parties, strangely enough, and unintentionally no doubt, lends support to Comrade Stalin's views. "It would however be a mistake to suppose that the division (between the Muslim League and the Congress) is purely communal and regardless of political principles. If the two contending parties were to be described in political parlance, they might be called respectively progressive and ultra-radical. The methods of the two parties differ widely in practice and give rise to a number of points, on which there are accurate differences in the angle of vision."

Edward Thompson's views on this subject, expressed in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of 9th August, 1941, are also quite pertinent.

"Mr. Amery continually declares the fact that, unlike our own political parties, Congress puts party before the state, and showed this,

when they formed ministries from their own supporters, Muslims and other, after winning the 1937 elections. Congress acted within their rights and exactly as they thought they were intended to act. When has any British political party won an election and then invited its defeated opponents to sit in its cabinets? Secondly, when the Congress Working Committee pulled out its ministries, this was Fascism and Totalitarianism. In what way again did it differ from British practice? I will not go into the question of Trade Union influence on labour political action, but refer only to a celebrated meeting at the Carlton Club (October 19, 1922), when the Chief Whip brought the party 'together with a snap and the meeting, by what Lord Birkenhead styled, 'an act of monumental folly and ingratitude,' pulled Conservative ministers out of the Cabinet. I think you will find that Congress leaders have acted remarkably as our own leaders act, with the added consciousness that they are striving desperately to make an Indian nation and to leave it free, whereas we have long ago won our freedom."

In spite of these weighty opinions, if it is necessary to assume that as a matter of political expediency, the Congress should have formed coalition ministries, the obvious question is with whom they should have coalesced. We have already stated how small was the strength of the Muslim League in the Legislatures. Except in Bombay, the other Muslim groups were numerically bigger than the League. If a consistent policy for the whole of the country had

to be determined, could it be said that the Congress was at all wrong in selecting Muslim ministers from parties, other than the League and such as were willing to accept the Congress policy ?

But this is not all. The Congress actually made an attempt to get the Muslim League to share power with it. Pandit Nehru said as much in his letter to Mr. Jinnah : "It (the Congress) will always gladly co-operate with other groups, whether it is in a majority or a minority in an Assembly in furtherance of that programme and policy (with which it has gone to the Assembly). On that basis, I can conceive of even Coalition Ministries being formed." Mr. Jinnah, however, would not accept the preferred hand of friendship. At last Panditji wrote : "I am afraid our letters to each others repeat themselves. I go on requesting you to tell us what exactly are the points in dispute which have to be discussed and you go on insisting that this should not be done by correspondence." Mr. Jinnah, in reply, hinted at the Fourteen Points. The Panditji, in a long and a unimpeachable reply, pointed out that many of these had been conceded and the rest were somewhat outmoded. Cryptically, Mr. Jinnah repeated, "I do not propose to discuss the various matters, referred to by you by means of and through correspondence."²³

To another leader of the League, Nawab

²³M. A. Jinnah, Leaders' Correspondence with Mr. Jinnah, p. 77-152.

Muhammad Ismail Khan, Pandit Nehru wrote in the same strain. "I do not quite know what our differences are in politics. What are the specific policies and programmes or principles of the Congress, with which you do not agree? You will remember that you and Khaliq-uz-Zaman told us that you agreed with the Wardha programme of the Congress. This is a pretty comprehensive programme which includes almost everything that we stand for." The Nawab Saheb's reply was a masterpiece of fencing. "You have very kindly asked me to define our point of differences but I think having regard to our readiness to work in the Legislature on the basis of the Wardha programme, which as you say, is fairly comprehensive, it is now for you to point out where you still differ from us." Comment is hardly necessary on this type of studied duplicity.

This attitude of the Muslim League leaders is, however, in strange contrast to the election pledge of the League, for free co-operation with any groups, whose aims and ideals are approximately the same as those of the League party, particularly in view of the Nawab Saheb's admission of the League's readiness to work in the Legislature on the basis of the Wardha programme.

Thus when the Congress sought prior agreement on programmes and policies, the Muslim League evaded the issue and yet faults have been found with the Congress for not sharing power with other parties, without any mutual understanding among the co-sharers !

It is interesting to watch, what may be called "the rake's progress" during the twenty-seven months that the Congress was in power in a majority of the eleven provinces of British India. For that purpose, we shall re-trace our steps and reiterate a part of the stand taken by the Muslim League in its election manifesto. Its separate party for the contesting of elections "formed as a corollary, so long as separate electorates exist". It was made to appear that the Muslim League did not even care for separate electorates, but so long as these existed, it had to form a separate party of its own. After the Congress was saddled in power and after having spurned the hand of friendship extended by the Congress, Mr. Jinnah, in his Presidential address to the Special Session of the League at Calcutta in April 1938, claimed for the League "the status of complete equality with the Congress". Four months later, when Sjt. Subash Chandra Bose, the then President of the Congress was negotiating for a settlement with the Muslim League, Mr. Jinnah advanced the further claim for the League as "the only authoritative and representative political organisation of the Mussulmans of India" and wanted the Congress, with over fifty years of nationalism behind it, to be "the authoritative and representative organisation of the solid body of Hindu opinion".²⁴ A couple of months later, the Sind provincial Muslim League Conference wanted

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 61-74.

two federations in India. Early in the next year, fifty per cent share in the governance of India was demanded for the League by its permanent President. Then in September 1939, with the declaration of the European war, a full-fledged war was also declared on Indian Nationalism by the Muslim League Working Committee's resolution, stating that "Muslim India, is opposed to the domination of the Hindu majority over Mussulmans and other minorities and vassalisation of Muslim India, and is irrevocably opposed to any 'Federal objective,' which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and a parliamentary system of Government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the people of the country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national state".

The seeds of Pakistan were here laid. One supposes that it was through oversight, or more probably a typist's error that the singular 'people' instead of the plural 'peoples' crept in. And what was the attitude of the foreign bureaucracy on this subject? "I was astonished last autumn (August-September 1939) to find that certain officials circles were keen on the Pakistan idea".²⁵

The next step, a corollary, no doubt, but of a different kind from that mentioned in the Election Manifesto of 1936 was the Pakistan

²⁵Edward Thompson, *Enlist India for Freedom*, p. 59.

resolution of 1940, but before it was passed, there were developments in the international sphere, which had their repercussions on this country and its national life.

It is irrelevant to the subject matter of this essay to detail the circumstances, under which the Congress withdrew its ministries, soon after the declaration of the war and on being satisfied that this war, and all that it was supposed to stand for, had made no change whatever in the mentality of the power-mad Imperialists of Great Britain. The candid efforts, made by the Congress to come to terms with Britain at this juncture and not to take advantage of Britain's troubles in Europe are not germane to the issue before us, though they speak volumes for the honesty of purpose of the Congress and its leaders and of course the contrary proclivities of Britain and its Imperialists. The fact remains that in December 1939 the Congress ministries resigned simultaneously in eight provinces of British India.

This is the proper occasion for dealing with the "atrocities" charges, levelled by the Muslim League against the Congress, though these should not detain one long. As to the charge that the Muslims were kept out of power in the Congress provinces, it is pertinent to note that of the 71 ministers, 26 were Muslims, 10 of other minorities and 35 were Hindus. In the Congress provinces, out of 35 ministers, six were Muslims and five of other minorities. This was the position before Congress formed

Coalition Ministries in the North-West Frontier and Assam. Thereafter, the position could be summed up as of 35 Hindu ministers and 35 ministers of the other communities.

Next, when the Muslim League published a report detailing the atrocities, committed on Muslims in the provinces governed by the Congress ministries, which has gained notoriety as the Pirpur Report, Babu Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Congress, on 5th October, 1939, sent an offer to the League for an examination of these charges by Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. This letter is sufficiently important to be quoted at some length.

"In the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League passed recently in Delhi, reference has been made to the Provincial Governments. It is stated that provincial autonomy in several provinces has resulted in the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minorities, whose life and liberty, property and honour are in danger, and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated, everyday, under the Congress Governments in various provinces. We feel that these charges are wholly unfounded. On a previous occasion, we expressed our willingness to have any specific instances investigated by impartial authority. We would like this course to be adopted with regard to any specific instances that are put forward. If you agree, we could request the highest judicial

authority in India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of the Federal Court, to inquire into this matter. Significantly enough, the Muslim League omitted to respond to this offer !

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the present President of the Congress, has also unequivocally declared on this question that "During all this period, no complaint which came to my knowledge went without being inquired into. My attitude has remained strict and uncompromising in these matters.....It was not uncommon for me to go through the files of such affairs personally and strictly to examine them on every point."

Of much more importance it is to note that although the Governors of the Provinces have been vested with special powers to interfere for the protection of minority rights, not only did they not do so, but, on the contrary, paid a compliment to the Congress ministries at the time of their resignations. Of course, later, when the Congress was firm and unbending on the issue of the country's freedom, British statesmen followed the time-honoured policy of blackguarding the Congress.

It is also to be noted, no doubt, with considerable amusement by an impartial observer, that the Hindu Mahasabha also accused the Congress of perpetrating atrocities against the Hindus during its regime. True to the saying, "Hail fellow, will met," both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha joined in celebrating a Day of Deliverance, on 22nd December, 1939,

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from the Congress rule. This unholy alliance has continued in later dealings :

On a proper consideration of all this, one cannot but differ from Prof. Humayun Kabir, who in the main body of his *Muslim Politics* seems to treat the charges of the Muslim League against the Congress in the light of the proverb, "There can be no smoke without fire !" However, we can only say that in modern politics, as in modern warfare, smoke-screens are created without any fire, and are a well-known method of escape or escapism, flight or deception !

VIII

TWO NATIONS

The comparison of the meeting of the Viceroy of India with fifty-two invitees, after the declaration of the war, with that of an all powerful joker and a pack of fifty-two playing cards has often been made, and although obvious, loses nothing of its pleasantry and significance by repetition. It may also be that the Viceroy was playing at shy-widow, where a girl sits in a chair, and the men are expected to come in turns and kiss her. As can be expected, the result was nil, but in a letter to Mr. Jinnah on 23rd December, 1939, the day following the celebration of Deliverance from Congress rule, Lord Linlithgow stated, "I can assure you that His Majesty's Government are not under any

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misapprehension as to the importance of the contentment of the Muslim community, to the stability and success of any constitutional development in India. You need therefore have no fear that the weight which your community's position in India necessarily gives their views will be under-rated." Was this not a paraphrase of Lord Minto's reply to the Muslim deputation in 1906 ?

Drawing solace and encouragement from such an assurance, the Muslim League Sessions of 1940 passed what has now been referred to for brevity's sake as the Pakistan Resolution. The relevant portion thereof deserves quotation: "Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims, unless it is designed on the following basic principles, *viz.*, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

After demanding safeguards for the Muslims and other minorities in other parts of India and making provision for similar safeguards in these geographically contiguous units, the resolution went on to authorise "the

Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles for the assumption, finally by the respective regions of all powers, such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

It is a significant commentary that over four and a half years have passed, but the Working Committee has lacked either the time or the ability to frame the scheme in question.

Let us quote four criticisms, without any comment from us. "Above all there is a rough parallel between the Sudetan movement in Czechoslovakia and the advocacy of partition in India. The entire course of events was fully reported and closely observed in India. The progress of the Sudetan demands from a larger share in administration and policy to a repudiation of minority status, the claim to separate nationhood, denial of Czechoslovak unity, charges of atrocities and oppression, unsupported by evidence, the demand for frontier revision, the advocacy of a virtual partition together with claim of fifty per cent share in the residual central organisation, all these features in the Sudetan movement of 1936-38 found their counterpart in the resolutions of the Muslim League in 1938-41. In fact some of the phrases employed are identical."²⁶

²⁶ Beni Prasad, *Hindu-Muslim Questions*, pp. 71-2.

"The fine humane Stafford Cripps" of 1940, as Mr. Louis Fischer calls him, is even more emphatic. "The controllers of the Muslim League are drawn almost entirely from the professional, landlord or industrial class of well-to-do Muslim Masses.....They would like to see the return of the Muslim domination in India, but as this is impossible they have regarded the continuation of British rule the lesser of two evil alternatives. The other is the government of India by peasants and workers through adult suffrage and a democratic Indian constitution. They fear this latter alternative even more than they dislike British rule. It is for this reason that they have refused to support the demands of Congress. We must ask ourselves whether the 250 million Hindus are to be denied self-government, because 80 million Muslims either are afraid of it or put forward an impractical suggestion for the division of India. In truth, if the 80 million Muslims were left to make their own political decision without any injection of communal animosity, the great majority of them would support the Congress Party's programme. In fact many of them do today. The attitude that is being adopted today by the British Government is that they can and will do nothing further, until the Hindus and the Muslims settle their differences. This gives the reactionary leaders of the Muslim League the power to prevent the people of India getting self-government, almost indefinitely. It is this attitude which the British Government

is in fact encouraging, whether consciously or unconsciously."²⁷

"For a community like the Muslims, scattered as it is in all parts of India, in varying proportions, there is, however, nothing in common as between the Muslims of several provinces, except religion and tradition. In all provinces and states where the Muslims are found in any considerable proportions, they have adopted the local language, follow local usages and develop local loyalty in pursuit of material interests common with their neighbours of other faiths. The Punjab and the Bengal Muslims have developed as intense a local feeling as the Hindus of those provinces, which has begun to cause a new type of minority that constitutes a problem by itself. Efforts have been made, no doubt, in recent years, to develop a community sentiment by emphasising a common Muslim language and a distinct Muslim culture. But it is open to question, if these, even if successful, today, would resist the sentiment of local solidarity and of economic community of interests, when once this line of demarcation is done away with. The conflict between the 'Mulki' Mussulman in Hyderabad (Deccan), and 'non-Hydrabadi' Mussulman is an instance in point."²⁸

²⁷Eric Estorick, *Stafford Cripps, Prophetic Rebel*, quoted by Louis Fischer in the article in *Nation*, later re-published by Hamara Hindustan Publications under the title of *Imperialism Unmasked*.

²⁸M. N. Dalal, *Whither Minorities?* p. 121.

"The case against Pakistan can be argued from various points of view, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim. It is the last which is most important and which has hitherto received the least attention. From the purely Muslim viewpoint, it has not been realised that the partition of India would be damaging to the whole of India and to all its inhabitants, but more damaging to Muslims themselves than to anybody else. It is extraordinary how propaganda war waged with modern weapons can, for a short period, at any rate make people believe in the incredible against their own interests and better judgment. Pakistan is a political slogan of great potency in the rape of the Muslim masses, and this makes it all the more imperative that its meaning, its significance and its implications are fully understood in order to lessen as much as possible, its devastating effects."²⁹

It is also significant to see how the league wants to overcome Sikh opposition to the establishment of a separate state for the Muslims. It is clear that in such a state in the North-West, the Sikhs would enjoy *vis-a-vis* the Muslims the analogous position that the Muslims occupy in the whole of India. But, apparently, what is sauce for the goods is not sauce for the gander, and the League uses the same argument against the Sikhs' opposition, which, it has most vehemently denounced, when used by those who plead for a united India.

²⁹Shakatulla Ansari, *Pakistan, the Problem of India*, p. 53.

"The creation of bigger Punjab with natural expansion in the North-West and South, so as to include Kashmir, the Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan is in reality the regeneration of the old historical kingdom, which the Sikhs tried to keep united in their time of glory and *which now will be supported by the combined might of Muslims and Sikhs*. A true Punjabi should always try to place the interests of his country first and should never agree to see his country fall from its real position," admonishes the worthy Mr. Jinnah.⁸⁰ One is tempted to ask in turn, "Should not a true Indian do the same?" El Hamza in his *Pakistan a Nation* further gives the show away. "The Pakistan Hindus are true children of the soil and are of the same race as their Muslim countrymen. Sikhs are typical Pakistanis."

If logic, reason and reasonableness had a better place in politics than demagoguery, perhaps the Muslim League itself would withdraw the demand for Pakistan as untenable on its own showing! Another stock argument for separation is the alleged differences between the rice-eating Madras and wheat-eating Punjabi, and yet it is conveniently forgotten that the staple food of the eastern area of the Pakistan-to-be is rice and nothing but rice; and even in the grave scarcity and man-made famine of 1943, many Bengalis refused to touch wheat!

1940 saw nothing else of note, except

⁸⁰M. A. Jinnah, *India's Problem of her Future Constitution*.

reverses for Britain in the European war, and since then oft-repeated August declaration of the Viceroy for an expanded Executive Council. He again made it clear that "It goes without saying that they (the British) could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by larger and powerful elements in Indian National life. Nor could they be parties to coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government." Mr. Amery, who had then only just taken up the post of the Secretary of State for India, probably as a result of some divine inspiration or a deep dream of peace, of the Abou-Ben-Adhem variety, suddenly discovered that "in religious and social outlook, in historic traditions and culture, the difference between them (the Muslims) and their fellow countrymen goes so deep, if not deeper than any similar difference in Europe". Falsifying the history of his own country since the days of the Magna Charta, Mr. Amery was of the opinion that the "decision by majority is not so much of the essence of democracy as a political convenience" and he felt that, "it may indeed prove to be the case, it is by *entirely novel departure* from the existing scheme that an agreement can be reached, which is unattainable within the frame work of the existing Act". The League resolution, an "entirely novel departure" was then four months old, and had Hitler and his hordes, instead of wasting unnecessary time, seriously invaded

England at that time, Mr. Amery would surely have had the satisfaction of realising an "entirely novel departure" in the constitution of his own country,—no doubt with the full support and connivance of his son John!

Is it any wonder then that this idea of "entirely novel departures" spread in India in 1941. The Justice Party of Madras, which was thoroughly discredited in the provincial elections of 1937, came forward with a separate demand for Dravidistan, and looked forward to Mr. Jinnah to support it. The latter however was too shrewd to commit himself directly, but he had no hesitation in saying at the Madras Sessions of the League, "Imagine what that three per cent of the high castes (Brahmins) can do by skilful manœuvring and by skilful methods of electioneering. Three per cent of them have secured a majority rule. Is this democracy?"

Kind-hearted and obliging as ever, Mr. Amery responded almost at once, by affirming that "the Indian statesmen need not be bound by a system of Government at the centre contemplated in the Act (1935) or by relation between the centre and the provinces". No wonder that a meeting between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah in this year proved abortive. But a meeting between British and Japanese arms at the end of the year produced some results in the next year.

IX

POST-DATED CHEQUE AND CHURCHILL'S AGENT-PROVOCATEUR

In the Court of Lord Justice Mars, in the matter of the British Empire, liquidation proceedings had been instituted by Tojo and others, on behalf of themselves and all other Imperial rivals of Britain, against Winston Churchill and others, and the learned Judge had been pleased to pass an interim order for the liquidation of Malaya and Burma. As recently revealed, the Chinese Government was anxious to send its soldiers to the help of the American General Stillwell, waging a lone fight in Burma against terrible odds, but the then Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, Sir Archibald (now Lord) Wavell, with his usable eye turned on Mr. Churchill in London and his blind eye on the plight of the General, was adamant that an attempt should not be made to save Burma with the help of Chinese troops. Justly so. Like the congregation of Goldsmith's village preacher, to whose church "Those, who came to scoff, remained to pray," the Chinese military coming to help in the liberation of Burma from Japan may want to remain to see it liberated from any other Imperialism, too!

Those brilliant withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma had an effect on the political situation in India; it was the Cripps offer of March-April 1942. It is not necessary

to detail here the Cripps proposals, or even criticise them. The Cripps offer is as dead as the dodo, notwithstanding the affirmations to the contrary of British statesmen. Suffice it to clarify a few issues. The negotiations did not break down on the communal question, but because, even in the emergent situation then existing, the British Government refused to part with real power. The *New York Times* in its issue of 17th August, 1942, published a statement made by Mr Jinnah in Bombay. As is usual with and befitting the President of the Muslim League, he began with a lot of garbage about the terrible and calamitous things he was capable of, if he found that the British came to an agreement with Congress and the Hindus. All the same, more than once, he happened to mention that he was ready to form a provisional Government of India. "Naturally, it would be necessary to obtain the support of all groups, including the Congress," added Mr. Jinnah!

Maulana Azad, the Congress President, in a statement issued after he and Pandit Nehru had met the then Commander-in-Chief and the present Viceroy at the suggestion of Sir Stafford, stated that they (the Maulana and the Pandit) had expected to meet a military strategist, and found that they had to deal with a politician! Could any other short statement be so damning?

"It can now be revealed," as military despatches of disasters usually begin by saying,

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that Sir Stafford had at least proposed a National Government with responsibility,—and he had no authority to do so. The Defence hurdle had been crossed, but the negotiations definitely broke down on the question of the Viceroy's rights in relation to his Council.

In his latest book, *People On Our Side*, Edgar Snow relates the following statement, made by Pandit Nehru to him. "He (Cripps) amazed me. Apparently he never believed me when I said in the past that we wanted complete independence. Now, when it came down to it and he saw we were in earnest, he was hurt and surprised, when I spoke of matters formerly taken for granted between us. 'You don't mean you really want to break away from us entirely, do you?' he asked me. Think of it! After all I have said and written, and after all Cripps himself has written!" When the Pandit is thus disillusioned, what more can the common man have to say about Sir Stafford Cripps and his mission?

Far more significant for our purposes is the fact that, once again, in spite of all the encouragement given by Mr. Amery, Lord Linlithgow and other British statesmen to the communal forces and particularly to the Muslim League, when a crucial stage in the negotiations was reached, the discussions were carried on entirely with the Congress. If, for personal aggrandisement, the Congress leaders had agreed to the proposals for joining the Viceroy's Executive Council, regardless of the question of the

Viceroy's veto, the British Government would have jumped at the offer, and, to quote the phraseology of a predecessor of Mr. Amery, "left Mr. Jinnah high and dry". It can only redound to the credit of the Congress that the Congress spurned to adopt such a course, which was opposed to the principles, for which it stood! But the British Government, as on the previous occasions, already referred to, such as the rendition of the Bengal partition in 1911, and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, was quite willing to ignore the Muslims, and the so-called communal tangle.

It is not necessary to take notice of the altered Sir Stafford Cripps, from his original *avatar*, some of his views during which, have already been mentioned, nor of the black-guarding of the Congress, in which he too indulged.

And new, from Sir Stafford Cripps, let us come down on Professor R. Coupland, C. I. E., M. A., etc. This is an easy step, as the Professor was one of the *entourage* of the Cabinet Minister, who had descended on India with his mysterious bag of tricks.

The mantle of Mr. Coatman of 1932, the time of the Round-Table Conferences, has fallen on the Professor of ten years later. It will be recalled that the former had written about the formation of a powerful Muslim State. Now that this suggestion has been taken up, it behooved the learned Professor to vomit out some other ill-digested stuff, and

thereby prove his fidelity to his Imperialist lord and master, Mr. Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain.

One Buridan is said to have experimented with an ass, who was placed exactly midway between two equally large and equally succulent bundles of hay. The ass, being perfectly rational, proceeded to starve, since, receiving no greater stimulus from the one bundle than from the other, he could find no good reason for preferring the one to the other! And so, Buridan's rational ass has passed into literature along with his wisely obstinate ancestor, belonging to the Biblical Balaam. Buridan's ass, pitiable creature, only did harm to himself, but, the foreigner in India, pretending to be undecided whether to accept the cogent demand of the Congress for independence, or to give the glad eye to the equally strong demand for Pakistan, wisely decides to starve the country's constitutional progress! If Balaam's ass, obstinately refusing to respond to the goads and kicks from his master, saved the latter's life, an imitation of his methods by the third party in India, also impedes the country's progress towards the goal of *swaraj*, a veritable pitfall, as it may be considered, by the third party for itself!

Into this static condition, that may be said to be between two asses, stepped the great Professor Coupland, urging Balaam's ass to a pass of safety, and solving the quandary that faced the other rational ass, by suggesting a

quadrangular, regional division of the country,—to enable it the more easily to be held in the clutches of the foreigner.

Many and varied are the ailments that have afflicted the Professor, as can be seen from the pages of his three volumes on the Constitutional Problem of India, but none so acutely as a communal complex. He can see men and parties with only communal labels, everywhere in India, in Ministries and governments, parties and States. No ministry in a Province, but must be analysed by him, according to the community of the members thereof. And he must also horrify the Liberals by dubbing them as "Hindu Liberals", something never attempted by any one before him, not even Katherine Mayo, and if done hereafter, could only be regarded as were cheap imitation.

The Fellow of All Souls and Nuffield Colleges sees the British planning their own withdrawal from India since 1833,—think of it! What generosity! What unselfishness! Only the speed has averaged about a mile a decade, a hundred and ten years later, the British have not progressed more than eleven miles on their outward journey. So, looking to the size of India, it is child's work to calculate, when the process will be complete.

It is the fashion, these days, to bandy about words like 'authoritarian', 'totalitarian'. These epithets must therefore come handy to Professor Coupland. The Princes have main-

tained the Oriental tradition of autocracy. Shades of Nabha and Alwar, Tudors and Stuarts! And, of course, the Congress has been totalitarian,—does not Professor Coupland say so?—and therefore, it must be so, while the Government of British India, with the Viceroy vested with the powers enjoyed by him, and the Governors of the Provinces, given the powers they possess and exercise, is the model democracy. Every March, one witnesses this show of democracy, after the Budget debate in the Central Assembly. It is only a slip on the part of the Professor to admit that “the introduction of quasi-Cabinet Government” in the Congress Provinces placed a strain on the Indian Civil Service, with which the use of the big stick against the Congress had become almost a habit, and this service, as working in the democratic regime of British rule in India, would have to “cease to exist, at least in the present form,” if India attained the status of a free country!

Again, at Imperial Conferences and at the League of Nations, (now *hors de combat*), India, in the Professor's imagination, is a member in her own right, her representatives being—nominated by the Government of India. How many souls does the Fellow of All Souls' College expect to reclaim to his way of thought by this patter,—excluding those who have seen India's “representatives” in action at these august assemblies?

It is nothing strange also to see a profes-

sor of this type forget all admissions made with regard to the origin of separate electorates for the Moslems, and consider these as conceded by the foreigner in a spirit of pure altruism, and, of course, democracy.

Sometimes, the Professor is a bundle of contradictions. Feeling, that he had perhaps gone too far in admitting that, except in Moslem (not Muslim League!) and some other minority (which?) circles, it was generally regretted that the work the Congress Governments were doing for the people of the Provinces should have been interrupted at the end of 1939, when they resigned, he must pull himself up and say a little later, that, if the Congress Governments had lasted a little longer disorders would have broken out on an unprecedented scale!

With this background, what better picture can one expect from Professor Coupland than that drawn by him,—cutting up India into four almost water-tight compartments, and styling this process the River Basins Scheme? Without proper frontiers, without adequate inter-relations, without sufficient authority in a Central Government, Professor Coupland's regions would provide a good pasturage for the foreigner, who, in any such weakened and divided state of the country, would find a ready excuse for the continuance of his authority, by playing off one region against another.

Then, too, like all good democrats and upholders and faithful followers of democratic

institutions, Professor Coupland's vision of Indian India is not a little blurred, so that he can see therein only the Princes and not the people. It is the Princes, who will prefer to have a separate state of their own, rather than submit to "subjection to Congress *raj*." *A fortiori*, it is the Princes, who will thus be the greatest bulwark of British *Raj*. So India, as a whole, must be stampeded into recognising the 'rightful' place of these Princes in any future constitution of India. Sceptres and crowns may have tumbled down in civilised Europe, in and after 1919, and more may follow suit at the end of World War II, but under the benign protection of British rule.

Sceptre and crown can never be equal made

With the poor, crooked, scythe and spade,
in backward, poverty-stricken, illiterate, uncivilised India. That would be a possibility too horrible to contemplate for the likes of the Fellows of All Souls' College and of foundations of captains of industry like Lord Nuffield.

And so, the whole sordid story, or more appropriately vision of the future constitution of India, according to apostle Coupland may go on,—but has not one had a sufficient taste of it? Why prolong the agony, extend the misery? Suffice it to say that Professor Coupland had a duty to perform, a task to accomplish as the employee,—one must not sully the pen by using the obvious harsher word,—of the First Minister of the British King. When History comes to be written, like unto an

epitaph, it will be said of Professor Coupland:
"Well done, thou brave and faithful servant!"

X

AND AFTER

The failure of the Cripps mission very much deteriorated the situation. The Congress called upon the British to withdraw from India, transferring power to Indians. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, made it clear on 15th July, 1942: "the Congress does not desire to take power for itself but for all". He had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League or any other party, provided it was real independence. Gandhiji wrote in the same strain to a Muslim friend, Dr. Latif. "Provided the Muslim League co-operated fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject of course to the provision that independent India will permit the operations of the Allied armies in order to check Axis aggression and thus to help both China and Russia, the Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it to-day exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India. And Congress will not only obstruct any Government that the Muslim League may form on behalf of the people, but will even join the Government in running the machinery of the free state."

Needless to say that neither the Government nor the Muslim League responded to this proposal and on the memorable 8th August, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed in Bombay a resolution that for brevity, has been known the world over as "the Quit India" resolution. The trend of the speeches on this resolution was that freedom could not wait for a communal unity, which had more chances of being reached after the country was liberated from the foreign yoke than before that consummation came to pass. The arrests of the Congress leaders took place on 9th August, 1942.

Mr. Jinnah had firmly expressed the opinion that if the threatened Civil Disobedience movement of the Congress was launched, violent clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims would be the inevitable result. Is it that in the absence of any such undesirable communal riots, one must conclude that Mr. Jinnah's bluff was called off, and that the Muslim masses had more sense than Mr. Jinnah gave them credit for, or that, because the events that followed the 9th August, 1942, were not in pursuance of the movement to be launched by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji, but merely a spontaneous outburst of the people, that there were none of the ugly scenes, which Mr. Jinnah had so confidently predicted?

For reasons, which do not concern us here, after about a couple of months, it was clear that the tempo of the struggle had considerably

slackened, and Imperialist Britain felt assured that it would have no need to come to terms with Indian nationalism.

‘History, not wanted yet,
Leaned on her elbow, watching Time,
whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme.’

The White soldiers, about whose presence in India in numbers greater than ever before, Mr. Churchill boasted in Parliament, had saved India for Britain. By a similar exhibition, has Manchukuo and a large part of China been saved for Japan! Mr. Churchill's arithmetical acrobatics about the actual opponents of the Congress, need not detain us, for world opinion, where it was not utterly dense, saw through such addled figures, akin to those of the unscrupulous and deceitful employer of the anecdote, who, when his workman asked for a rise in his salary, sought to prove, by deductions of Sundays, holidays, and the hours daily spent outside the establishment, that the employee was actually not working at all, and owed some days of work to his generous master!

More subtle, however, was the statement in Parliament of the Labour Member and Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, made on 8th October, 1942. He said, "There are a number of extremely effective minorities who must be considered. There are the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Princes and population of the Indian States". At least, one of these effective minorities, repu-

diated this unsought protections, thrust upon them. Bearing more than a thousand signatures, representative of all walks of life, classes and professions, a manifesto was issued by the Parsis, which ended with these memorable words! "We therefore whole-heartedly support the demands of all political parties, communities and commercial and industrial bodies that India must achieve here and now her freedom, which is overdue, particularly at this hour, so that with the glow of freedom burning within her, she may effectively resist any foreign aggression. To this end, we feel that it is very necessary that the accredited leaders of the country should be released immediately and negotiations started with them on the basis of declaring India a free country". This manifesto received very wide publicity. It however speaks well for the patience, perseverance and solicitude of the foreigner, that six months later, Mr. Attlee again repeated his statement, and Prof. P. A. Wadia, the President of the Freedom Group was compelled to issue a statement, once again drawing pointed attention to the manifesto.

About this time, too, Mr. William Phillips, who had been appointed as the personal envoy in India, of President Roosevelt came to Bombay. The President of the Freedom Group addressed a letter to him, which was also released to the press. It will be well-worth quoting a few passages from this letter, as it ably sums up the situation in India: "It is our emphatic opinion that as far as the problem

of India is concerned, there is no separate Parsi or Hindu or Muslim point of view. That problem is the simple problem of securing a free and independent position for India in the comity of nations. Less than two hundred years ago, your country was more or less in the same situation as ours. Scientific knowledge had not then made such large strides as at present, and with less efficient and deadly arms than at present, a subject country could not then be held by force as easily as today, it could the more easily be held in subjection at present, especially, when it is disarmed and helpless. We take it therefore that your people and your Government are in sympathy with the subject peoples of the world. We need not add that we Indians are one such people. From past experience your people could know what methods are generally adopted by one nation to keep another in subjection. The history of your country in the eighteenth century shows how divisions came to exist in your country between different sections of the people. It is well-known too that the morale of a people long kept in subjection and deliberately disarmed is bound to be low. It is always easy for the foreign rulers to win over individuals and communities in subject countries through the offer of the loaves and fishes of office. If this were not so, Hitler could never have held so many countries of occupied Europe in subjection for the last three years. In an impoverished country like India, where tens of millions do not get one square meal a day, the

offer of comparatively high salaries in the service of the rulers is bound to attract. Your country has abolished all titles. But titles exist in India, where they are conferred by those who rule over her destiny. Titles usually accompany services rendered to the established Government. The Indian States, though an institution peculiar to India under British rule are not quite unlike the host of title-holders. The Rulers of these states must hold allegiance to the British Paramount Power. They may not do so, only to court disaster for themselves. It is not a mere accident that most of these rulers are the holders of the longest lists of titles. Shorn, therefore, of complications created by vested interests, the rulers of Indian States and minority communities, hankering for privilege, the problem of India is very simple. To a man of your acumen and to an intelligent people like the Americans, it is hardly necessary to point out that Burma was denied its freedom, though there were none of the problems alleged to exist in India. Disunity among Indians and the so-called claims of minority communities would appear to be a convenient excuse for denying to this country the freedom to which she is entitled. We feel confident that your knowledge of the past history of your country and what you have already observed for yourself in India must have enabled you to obtain a clear perspective of the situation in India."

We make no apology for quoting this letter—"a clear perspective of the situation in

India," at length. Subsequent events, culminating in the Report, made by Mr. Phillips to his President, confirm the belief that Mr. Phillips must have read this letter very attentively!

Although the trouble that followed on the arrest of the Congress leaders was put down, both the mass upsurge and the manner of its suppression had their effect, principally, on those not owing allegiance to the Congress. The Sind Government under Khan Bahadur Allahbuksh was not a Congress Government. In fact, in an assembly of 60, the Congress strength was only 7, the United and the Hindu parties together had 29 members, and these, with the support of the Congress members, formed the Government, with Khan Bahadur Allahbuksh as its head. The Sind Premier tried to unite the Muslims, not owing allegiance to the League under an *Azad* banner and had issued a clarion call to them. An *Azad* Muslim Conference had also been successfully convened. The Sind Premier was also distressed at the way in which the Viceroy of India and his subordinates had suppressed the people's movement. Khan Bahadur Allahbuksh, therefore, wrote a letter to the Viceroy, in which he declared his intention of giving up his title of Khan Bahadur. But the Delhi Dictator thought that this was much more than the Prime Minister of a Province under Provincial autonomy could do, and as the Headmaster of the India High School, he instructed the teacher of the Sind standard to send for this *enfant terrible* and forthwith rusticate him. Accord-

ingly, for the great sin of giving up his title, which the August King-Emperor of India was pleased to confer on him, Mr. (now Khan Bahadur no more) Allahbuksh was dismissed from the Premiership, although he still enjoyed the confidence of the elected representatives of the people. Sir Gulamhussein Hidayatulla was called on to form a Ministry and accordingly Sind became a Muslim League Province.

In Bengal too, Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier, was getting restive. The mover of the Pakistan resolution in 1940 had once again taken a somersault, and was no more in the League. Already, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the brain of the Bengal cabinet, had resigned. Governor Herbert sent for Mr. Huq, had a typed letter of resignation kept ready for him to sign, and got him to sign it. A League Ministry was the result in Bengal also. It is significant to note that in both these provinces, the League had the support of the Hindu Mahasabha, and in Bengal also of the 10,000 % over-represented European Group ! It is not necessary to offer any comment. In the North-West Frontier, too, a Muslim League Ministry was formed and has been maintained by detaining the Congress M. L. a.'s. At three bye-elections, the Muslim League nominees triumphed over the Congress candidates. Dr. Khan Saheb, the Congress ex-Premier of the Province, made sensational allegations about the mal-practices which brought about this result.

There is little doubt, that, since the 1937

elections, the Muslim League has been able to obtain considerable more influence. One of the reasons Prof. Humayun Kabir gives for this is the deaths in this period of several nationalist Muslim leaders like Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and others. But the pattern of this increasing power is clear in what has happened in the provinces of Bengal and Sind. In the first half of 1943, when the effects of the aftermath of August 1942 had not yet died down, it was worth the while of the British to seek an alliance with the Muslim League, which, for temporary personal aggrandisement, was willing to make a sacrifice of any principles that it might have had. The revelations of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Mr. Huq in the Bengal Assembly after their resignations, showed that in the war period, the ministries wielded very little power, which was all concentrated in the hands of the Governor, who acted in concert with the European I. C. S. Secretaries over the heads of the Ministers. No self-respecting Indian would want to take part in this puppet show, yet the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, wherever they were given an opportunity rushed in, where others feared to tread!

Prof. Humayun Kabir finished his book in 1942, and wrote a post-script in 1943. The sting is in the tail, and the post-script shows that the author lost whatever little respect he had for the Muslim League after its baleful tactics in 1943. We are sure if the writer had started the book in 1943, many comments in

the book would have been different, as he would have seen things in better perspective then. As it is, the Professor is certain that all the other sections and parties in the Muslim community, such as the Nationalist Muslims, Ahrars, Momins, Khaksars, Shiahs, together will definitely far outweigh the League strength.

From August-September 1943, Bengal was enveloped in a man-made famine. If it were not so sad, it would be an amusing commentary on the communal claims that, at least the Moloch of starvation, like the impartial foreign power, made no distinctions of caste, creed or community in the victims claimed by it in its juggernaut progress. There were at least two indications that the foreigner himself was getting uneasy about the Frankenstein's monster of his creation, and wanted to put back the League in its proper place. As the famine grew, and could no more be hid from the scrutiny of the world, the British laid the blame for it on provincial autonomy, and blamed the Bengal Muslim League Government. It may be stated that the seeds of this plant of starvation had been already sown by the Bengal Governor and the military authorities, and the ministry in power was only a little less innocent than a new-born babe, in that it clung to a show of power which, as a puppet conglomeration, it did not possess.

"Mr. Amery and other British statesmen have been trying to make provincial autonomy responsible to a large extent for Bengal's present

trouble and some of the diehards are making the misery of the people of the province the chief plank in their propaganda against the capacity of the Indians to rule themselves. We entirely differ from Mr. Amery and others in fixing the responsibility for the present state of affairs in Bengal on the Provincial Government and we greatly deplore this anti-Indian propaganda of the diehards."⁸¹

A stronger indication of the fact that the British Government was getting a little tired of the Muslim League and no longer thought it worth while to make it dance to its tune, particularly as the revolt had been entirely suppressed, was the new Viceroy's address to the Central Legislatures in February 1944, where he stressed the geographical unity of India. Such tactics would not deceive a true nationalist, but it indicated, which way the British Government wanted the wind to blow. In an exhibition of impotent rage, the League fretted and fumed. The foreigner had, however, already sized up the League, when in February 1943, Mr. Jinnah had dared the Government to stop Gandhiji's letter to him, and the Government took up the challenge, only to find Mr. Jinnah in a neat but pathetic *volte face*.

A further disaster was in store for the President of the Muslim League. It was an

⁸¹Report of the League Leaders on the Bengal Famine, quoted from K. Santbanam's, *The Cry of Distress*, p. 115.

eye-sore, that the Punjab, as the stronghold of Pakistan, did not flaunt a Muslim League Government. Both the late Premiers, Sir Sikan-dar Hyat Khan and the present one Malik Khizr Hyat Khan gave a "Don't-touch-the-exhibits" warning of the Museum authorities to the Muslim League in the affairs of the Punjab. The Unionist, a non-communal party, had established a ministry since 1937, and was going to stick to it. Both the Premiers said that they were Muslim Leaguers in All-India affairs, and Unionists in the Punjab matters. The situation struck Mr. Jinnah as the teacher's circular manipulations of a square snuff-box as a hint to the pupil behind the back of the inspector, who had asked the student about the shape of the earth, had inspired the latter, who replied, "Round, Sir, on Sundays, square on other days". Mr. Jinnah wanted his globe of Pakistan to be round everywhere and on all days and he made a bid to break the Unionist Government in the Punjab and establish a Muslim League one. Not all could have stuck to their guns with the courage and precision of the Malik Sahab. Mr. Jinnah bullied, cajoled and threatened in turn. All to no avail! The Unionist Party remained firm as a rock, Mr. Jinnah threw himself with all his force against it, and rebounded to Kashmir, where he remained, nursing the rather sharp wounds to his vanity.

On May 6, 1944, Mahatma Gandhi was released from detention on medical grounds. This brings us to the last and most important

phase of the communal problem of India. Had Gandhiji's efforts been successful,—but why raise hypothetical issues! It was not to be,—for good or evil, time alone can tell!

At the time of Gandhiji's fast, in February 1943, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari had obtained his consent to a formula he proposed to place before Mr. Jinnah for a settlement between the Congress and the League, with a view to make a joint demands for India's freedom. Gandhiji not only endorsed the demand, but as a proposal from him alone would satisfy Mr. Jinnah, sent it to Mr. Jinnah, as coming from him. It is not necessary to quote the whole formula *verbatim*. It required the Muslim League to endorse the Indian demand for independence, and to co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period. After the war, a commission was to demarcate contiguous areas, where the Muslims were in an absolute majority and on a plebiscite in such areas agreeing to separation, to constitute them as separate, sovereign states, but with mutual agreements for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications and for other essential purposes. The terms of the agreement were to be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the Government of India.

It is hardly necessary to refer in any detail to the ten-thousand word correspondence between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah. The League President would not have a plebiscite, nor arbi-

tration, nor anything whatever, with the rest of India by way of mutual and reciprocal agreements. He would not explain the connotation of the term "Muslim". As Mr. Jinnah subsequently made clear to the correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, he would have the whole of the North-West Frontier, the Punjab, Baluchistan, Sind, Bengal and Assam declared as independent sovereign states. Even the Muslim League Lahore resolution of March 1940 contents itself with "geographically continuous units, demarcated into regions, which should be so constituted, *with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary*". (The italics are ours).

Even Dr. Latif, with whom Pakistan was a pet obsession, and who cannot, on any account be said to be inimical to Muslim interests, correctly interprets the Lahore resolution differently from what Mr. Jinnah claims under it by way of territory. "Under the principle of the Lahore resolution, you will have for your Pakistan states only those areas where the Muslims are in a predominant majority. You will thus have to forego in the North-West nearly a half of the Punjab—the Ambala division and the Kangra Valley, and confine yourself to the West of Lahore. In the North East, you cannot claim much beyond the Eastern Bengal and the Sylhet district of Assam".²² Apparently, the appetite of the Muslim League for territory grows by what it feeds on:

²² Syed Abdul Latif, *The Pakistan Issue*, pp. viii—ix.

Gandhiji makes it clear that he is not willing to recognise the Muslims, who have lived in India for nearly a thousand years, as a separate nation. But Mr. Jinnah, apparently is of that opinion, which he expressed in 1940 to Mr. Edward Thompson, who quotes a conversation he had with Mr. Jinnah: "Two nations, Mr. Jinnah, facing confronting each other in every province, every town, every village." "Two nations, confronting each other in every province, every town, every village. That is the only solution." "That is a very terrible solution, Mr. Jinnah." "It is a terrible solution, but it is the only one." (This conversation, oft-quoted since 1942, has been denied by Mr. Jinnah in October 1944.) And yet, how strange that this "terrible solution" of a separate nation never struck Mr. Jinnah. Just three years ago in October 1937, when he said, "The All-India Muslim League certainly and definitely stands to safeguard the rights and interests of Mussulmans and other minorities effectively." In only three years, the Mussulman minority was metamorphosed into a nation!

And what were British reactions to the talks between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah? It is said that the Zebra's stripes cannot be effaced. And how, then, could British Imperialism alter its habit? With a view to guard against the very remote contingency of an agreement between the spirit of nationalism and a convenient excuse for exhibiting to the world the alleged willingness yet inability to part with power,

new excuses had to be kept ready, to be produced by the mere wave of 'a conjurer's wand,' to adopt the Gandhian phraseology.

The talks between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah were at first scheduled to take place in August. Just a few days before the fixed date, by way of what has been picturesquely described as a time-bomb, came the Viceroy's letter of 15th August, 1944 to Gandhiji. It pointed out that the requirements of agreements between the main elements of India's national life and the negotiations of the necessary treaty arrangements with the British Government were intended to ensure the fulfilment of the duty of the British to safeguard the interests of the racial and religious minorities and of the doppedressed classes and the treaty obligations to the Indian States. Unexpectedly, the talks were postponed on account of Mr. Jinnah's illness and the time-bomb burst without producing the intended damage,—a 'damper on any zeal Mr. Jinnah may evince to come to terms.

Even more pointed was the London *Times*, a sort of *Pravda* of the present British Government which had first to incite the Muslim League, which hardly needed the hint, to go on emulating Oliver Twist and ask for more and yet more, and then to speak of other interests that had to be satiated. If "a number of extremely effective minorities, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Princes and the population of the Indian States" of Mr. Attlee's creation of

nearly two years back, had become rather hackneyed and stale, there were "fresh fields and pastures new," such as separate communal distinctive demands of Muslim and Hindu nation states, so far, by inadvertance, jumbled up into one, to be mentioned. Also "unorganised labour interests" needed the special protection of the foreigner, and they could be effectively represented by the Indian Federation of Labour, that was receiving from the Government a grant of Rs. 13,000 a month for keeping up the morale of workers, and the representatives of which were then already in London, by the same process than that which worked in reverse direction with Mr. Beverley Nichols, having received priority and air passage from India for London. Could anybody be more cute than the writer of such editorials in the *London Times*, or anybody placed in the same position, more foolish than the effective interests of the Federation of Labour, if they ever agreed to a demand made by the Congress and Muslim League jointly ?

So, as late as 25th September, 1944, Mr. Louis Fischer in a broadcast discussion with Sir Fredrick Puckle, one of the hundreds of agents of British Imperialism in the U. S. A., said that people of India did not trust Britain to give them their freedom. "The Cripps' proposals for Indian freedom are just another British formula. British policy in India is to divide and rule. There will be no unity, until after the British leave, not until then will they agree to come together and work out a

constitution and means of unity but the British do not want to liquidate their Empire. India furnishes Britain the way of keeping her Empire and maintaining a sphere of influence in Asia." This was what passed British censorship and was thought fit to be doled out to India. It is beyond her ken what more Mr. Fischer said. But this is surely enough !

XI

SO WHAT ?

It is a truism to say that the proper diagnosis of a disease is the first requisite for its complete eradication. Accordingly, a rather detailed tracing of the communal problem has hereinbefore been made, and the same has been X-rayed with as much perspicacity as possible. Two facts emerge as clear as daylight in this picture. The first is that at all times, the sinister hand of the foreigner is clearly visible in raising the communal bogey. "A very big thing happened" in 1908, "a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62,000,000 people from joining the hands of the seditious opposition." This is the admission of a high dignitary of Lord Minto's Government in a letter to Lady Minto. Other like pronouncements have been previously quoted. Even the Simon Commission admitted "That there was no spontaneous demand by the Muslims at that time

for separate electorates but it was only put forward by them at the instigation of an official whose name is well-known. "At the time of the Montford reforms, as the foregoing pages show, history again repeated itself. Further fragmentation of the electorate followed, although, in theory, the practice was considered undesirable. The Mr. Jinnah of the time of the Simon Commission was to be "left high and dry," while Lord Simon was advised to rally round him all elements, particularly, the Muslims, that would stand by him. Fear was to be inspired in the Hindus that the Commission was being got hold of by the Muslims! The origin of the Justice Party is yet another instance of the thesis.

The Act of 1935 was like a rake's progress in the matter of the distribution of special electorates, and they were given with a generosity, akin to that of a cheat with other people's monies in his hands. Even while the Third Round Table Conference was in progress, Mr. J. Coatman, C. I. E., was already talking of a "powerful Mohammedan State," coming into being in the North and North-West. The Punjabi Muslim Choudhary Rahmat Ali, an undergraduate of Cambridge, who was giving shape and form to Pakistan and "who was not pursuing any specific course of studies at Cambridge and had no ostensible means of support, but at the same time had ample funds for his somewhat luxurious entertainment of celebrities and propagandist activities. derived his inspiration

and funds from the India office.”³³ Soon after the Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution, Mr. Amery spoke of “entirely novel departures” by which agreement could be reached, thus giving direct support to Pakistan. In November 1941, Mr. Amery sang to the same tune, speaking of the Muslims having rightly or wrongly got the idea of any Central Government being “an obedient mouthpiece of the Congress High Command.” The Cripps’ proposals conceded Pakistan in principle. But the tide turned the moment Mr. Rajagopalachari wanted to negotiate with the Muslim League on the principle of Pakistan, and the two Viceroy, in succession, suddenly recalled the geographical unity of India! Finally, as has just been seen, when Gandhiji opened negotiations with the Quaide-Azam in September 1944, both the Viceroy and the officially inspired London *Times* strongly felt that an agreement between Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah was not enough. Even “important Labour interests” were supposed to be so far dumb, and needed to be consulted, through an agency, whom the Government was supporting with a payment of Rs. 13,000 a month.

“I have only twice met a Viceroy, but on each occasion, he made the same remark, “I have never known communal feeling more than it is now. Have you ?” This may be just a stock remark, which Viceroy make

³³Shaukatullah Ansari, *Pakistan, the Problem of India*. pp. 67.

to district officers to keep up their spirits. But its tacit implication is quite clear."⁸⁴. Not a single word of comment is necessary to make clearer the 'tacit implication', which the resigned I. C. S. officer of the Punjab has so candidly drawn. Up-to-date, therefore, as this brief summary shows, the leopard has not, and of course cannot change his spots, which have come into prominence at every timely hour.

The second fact which is prominently disclosed by the historical treatment of the communal problem is, that, when the hands of the foreigner are forced, the communal problem and the interests of the minorities are entirely forgotten. The rendition of the Bengal Partition in 1911 took place without any reference to the Muslims of Bengal, in whose interests, the partition was alleged to have been made. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was also arrived at with the Congress, when matters became rather too hot for Imperialism, and the "great Muslim nation" was not so much as consulted. The Cripps' proposals were, in effect discussed by its author with the Congress, and had the Congress sacrificed its principles for a mess of pottage, which was then offered, the minorities would have been covered in British eyes with one of the invisible caps of the fable. The Cripps' proposals were not wrecked on the rocks of Communalism, but were sunk in the

⁸⁴Penderel Moon, *Strangers in India*.

whirlpools of Imperialist Lust. In the same connection, it has to be noted that, except for a microscopic minority of Quislingesque mentality, almost all Indians want to see their country free, and whenever something is afoot to bring about this very desirable consummation, no Indian party or leader has dared to put obstacles in its way. So, although Mr. Jinnah thundered that, if Congress launched a civil disobedience movement in 1942, there would be violent clashes between Hindus and Muslims, nothing of the sort happened, and the same has been the experience on previous occasions, when direct action has been resorted to.

All the "civilised" world over, to the houses of the "Unhealthy Venus" in the towns are lured by unscrupulous persons, with false promises of good food, good clothes, enjoyment and money, the poor, backward country girls. It is, when these unfortunates are settled in these "houses," that, too late, they find that they have been deceived and provide occupation for the comfortably placed social workers! Somewhat akin to these backward country girls, innocent perhaps, but willing dupes, are the minorities of India, especially the big minority, (now glorifying itself as a "nation,") lured on by the unscrupulous foreigner with promises of having their interests looked after, of being dressed up in military "finery", of being given special treatment in the matter of services. And yet behind it all, regardless of communal considerations, the continuous,

unseen process of "bleeding white," (Lord Salisbury's coinage), what may be termed the rape of the masses, goes on !

*"Those lofty souls have telescopic eyes,
That see the smallest speak of distant pain,
While, at their feet, a world of agony,
Unseen, unheard, unneeded, writhes in pain."*⁸⁵

A corollary that follows from these two facts is that the Communal problem is incapable of solution in the presence of the foreigner in the seat of power. The example of other countries amply bears out this thesis. As the President of the Freedom Group wrote to Mr. William Phillips, "From past experience, your people would know what methods are generally adopted to keep another in subjection. The history of your country in the eighteenth century shows how divisions came to exist in your country between different sections of the people."

In the U. S. S. R., the principle of communities, classes and interests works out differently than under the Tsar. "For centuries, the Tsars oppressed the conquered and subjugat-

⁸⁵Quoted from an 1895 issue of *Great Thoughts* by Dadabhai Naoroji in his Third Statement before the Royal Commission on "Indian Expenditure and Apportionment Charge", from his *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, p. 341.

ed nations. The Tsarist Government incited one people against another, Russians against Jews, Tartars against Armenians. It fostered enmity among the non-Russian nationalities, engineered Jewish progroms, Armenian massacres, and bloody brutalities among the working masses of oppressed nationalities" ⁸⁶ From what Lenin called "a prison of nations" the U. S. S. R. has become what Barbusse calls, "a constellation of nations". It was after the seizure of power that the problem of minorities was tackled by Lenin and Stalin. One may confidently assert that Lenin would have laughed immoderately, had he been told to settle the "communal problem" in Russia within the framework of the Tsarist Imperialism and thus to present a united front to the Tsar. The example of Russia shows that a small but determined section of the people was responsible for the displacement of the Tsarist regime. Even now, one can imagine, Lenin's mausoleum shaking, as with uncontrollable laughter, whenever Indians "meet" to solve the communal problem!

Regarding Ireland, let Mr. D'Valera speak through his letter of 10th August, 1921, to the then first Minister of the English King: "Ireland's right to choose for herself the path she shall take to realise her own destiny must be accepted as indefensible. As regards the question at issue between the political minority and the great majority of the Irish people, that must remain a question for the Irish people

⁸⁶ Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 347.

themselves to settle. We cannot admit the right of the British Government to mutilate our country, either in its own interest or at the call of any section of the population." It was when Ireland became as hot as a piece of burning coal that Britain very generously dropped it from its leopard's paws.

The first condition that may therefore be suggested for a solution of the communal problem is that Indians must be masters in their own house. It is outside the scope of this essay to dilate in detail on how this should be accomplished. Suffice it to point out the absolute necessity therefore for solving the communal *malaise* and to disillusion the mind of the obsession that freedom cannot be achieved without communal unity. It must, however, be emphasised that India has developed its own technic of struggle, and that violence has definitely been ruled out therefrom. Two eventualities are possible. Self-suffering may bring about 'a change of heart' in the foreigner, which we consider has a percentage of failure of only ninety-nine point nine recurring percent. Through a well-organised movement on absolutely non-violent lines, it may be possible to bring about a state of affairs, where the foreigner may, after all, not consider worth his while any more to wear this "most precious jewel of the British crown." Instead of drawing five shillings in the pound of his income from a connection with India, about which Mr. Churchill spoke a decade and a half ago, it is possible for the foreigner to find a demand

on his income to maintain the "association" with India. Then, obligation or no obligation to "the great Muslim nation" or the "powerful minorities" and treaties or no treaties with "our noble allies" the Princes, the foreigner may find it worth his while to bid a courteous good-bye to this country.

In his Autobiography, Pandit Nehru admits that, with many other Congressmen, he, too, was shocked and appalled, when Gandhiji called off the Civil Disobedience Movement after Chauri Chaura, when the Congress was "within an inch of success". There is still honest difference of opinion as to the wisdom of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact from the point of view of the country, as many believe that more concessions could easily have been wrung out then. Only the historians of a future (and a free) India will gauge accurately how many inches away from success was the people's movement of 1942-43.

For a solution of the communal problem, it would well pay to concentrate attention on this aspect of the case than to work out artificial pacts with communal reactionaries. The instances of other countries point to this sole and only important remedy. The affairs of Ceylon show that, after a well-planned attempt at counterpoise of different communities, although the attempt was abandoned and there is no communal problem in Ceylon, it has not, on that account alone, achieved the status of a free country. Mr. Krishna in *The Problem of*

Minorities has traced in detail the political history of Ceylon. Burma was denied its freedom, though there were none of the problems alleged to exist in India." However, it is never too late to mend, and the Governor of Burma Sir Dorman-hen-Smith, at present exercising his governorship from far-distant Simla, is confident of hatching out with the aid of good old Mr. Amery-cock, some communal chickens by the time Burma is again a part of the British Empire, thanks to American men, money and arms.

A passage from the well-known despatch of Lord Durham on the proposed Constitution of Canada is extremely relevant. It reads: "It seems to have been the considered policy of the British Government to govern its colonies by means of division, and to break them down, as much as possible into petty isolated communities, incapable of combination, and possessing no sufficient strength for individual resistance to the Empire."

Every now and then, grandiloquently, the Indian leaders and press assert that freedom will not come to India as a gift from the foreigner,—it will have to be wrested from unwilling hands. To Mr. H. V. Hodson, a British journalist, Gandhiji once said: "The masses, when they are fully awakened, will assert themselves and combine for the sake of combatting common evils." There is, therefore, nothing, very revolutionary, or even original in the suggestion made here to the same effect.

And there is not even the proverbial riddle of the hen and the egg, about what came first,—the foreigner or the communal problem. Which-ever came first must also receive priority in the matter of departure,—this is only a matter of deduction and logic.

It is fruitless, too, to apportion blame according to community for apathy to the freedom movement. If Muslim Punjab is the granary of the foreigner's army, battalions of the Hindu sons and even daughters (the latter in Bombay Province, at least, recruited ninety per cent from Lokmanya's Maharashtra) make up for it in the army's clerical arm and especially in the civil administration, without whom, now hands all, be it remarked, the foreigner would not know what to do. It is best to keep out the captains of Industry, performing the miracle of being in Wardha and New Delhi at the same time. Their excuse would be, that, if they did not, somebody else would do the same job. And in any case, one must have more faith in the masses than in the Chosen Few.

It is indeed passing strange that in the several books on the communal question, that have so far seen the light of day, the imperative necessity of this one step forward for the solution of the alleged communal chaos has not received the attention it merits, and in many cases, no reference at all has been made thereto.

What was the appeal issued by the Bol-

sheviks, when they had seized power in November 1917? "Mohammedans of Russia, Tartars of the Volga and Crimea, Kirghiz and Sartes of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tartars of Transcaucasia, your beliefs and customs, your national institutions and culture are hereafter free and inviolable. You have the right to them. Know that your rights as well as those of all the peoples of Russia, are under the powerful protection of the Revolution and of the organs of the Soviets for workers, soldiers and peasants. Lend your support to this Revolution, and to its Government."

So ran this appeal. It had the immediate effect of rallying round the Bolsheviks, the progressive forces all over Russia, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that the communal differences, animosity and warfare of the time of the Tsarist regime, like the Arabs of the poet, just folded their tents at the break of this dawn, whether a false or a true dawn is beside the point here, and melted into the air. Stalin in *The October Revolution* is also worth quoting: "The liberation of the masses of the oppressed nationalities and the abolition of national oppression are inconceivable without a break with Imperialism, without overthrowing 'one' national bourgeoisie, and without the seizure of power by the toiling masses themselves."

Now, to come down to our own country, let us hear what the resigned White I.C.S. Mr. Moon has to say: "For years, the communal conflict has been in essence a struggle between

different sections of the *middle classes* for posts. And this struggle for posts is turning into a struggle for power,—struggle between two different sections of the upper and middle classes. The basis of the difference is religion, but religion is not the cause of the quarrel.³⁷ (*Italics are ours.*)

Pandit Nehru in his *Autobiography* thus describes the Second Round Table Conference : "It was all jobbery—big jobs, little jobs, jobs and seats for the Hindus, for the Moslems, for the Sikhs, for the Anglo-Indians, for the Europeans ; all jobs for the upper classes, the masses had no look-in." And in his letter of 25th December, 1939 to Dr. Latif, quoted in the *Pakistan Issue*, (page 20) the Panditji says: "The fundamental problem of India today is not political but one of poverty and unemployment and low production and vested interests, both foreign and Indian, which prevent progress."

The whole burden of the song of the well-documented and studied work of Dr. Krishna, an enlargement of his thesis for the Ph. D. of Harvard, *The Problem of Minorities* is that "class conflict rather than religious fervour is the real trouble."

"Unless a radical economic reconstruction of Indian society was effected, no solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem from the economic point of view was possible," thus asserted Prof. P. A. Wadia in an address to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay on "An

³⁷Penderel Moon, *Strangers in India*, p. 100.

Economist's Approach to the Problem of Communal Disharmony." "As the causes of the problem were man-made, the solution also can be man-made but so long as a competitive economic organisation, raised on capitalism and individualism persisted, so long the economic factor of the problem would continue."

Both Prof. K. T. Shah in his *Why Pakistan and Why Not* and Dr. Shaukatullah Ansari in his admirable *Pakistan* emphasise the need for a reorientation of the economy of India on a socialistic basis, as an essential factor for ridding India of the communal *malaise*.

The reason is not far to seek, why the discerning mind points the finger at the economy of the country for the solution of the communal problem. With inimitable theatrical fervour, Mr. Jinnah may orate on the two-nation theory, but it is not far to see how the true identity of interests lie. Only half a decade back, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai could be found any evening in conferences over a point of Hindu Law or Muslim Law, with briefs working out at 40 to 50 Cms. per day. At the same time, Mr. Jinnah's Muslim chauffeur could be seen also in conference with Mr. Desai's Hindu chauffeur, seated on the footboard of the Rs. 20,000 car of either of the two legal luminaries and dilating with an anxious face on the impending increase in his family and the impossibility of maintaining the family adequately on the pay received.

It would also be that Mr. Desai's chauffeur would be in more perfect sympathy and agreement with his confrere than the two learned friends would ever be, while arguing a case or either of them with his own chauffeur, although of his own community. The picture may not be true in all details, especially so far as the humbler members of this human family were concerned, but it is certainly true to life in its broader aspects. Mr. Birla is the Chairman of the United Commercial Bank and Mr. Isphani is the Vice-Chairman, and they would be at one in seeing what would be the least amount of dearness allowance that would satisfy the bank clerks, who, poor creatures, Hindus or Muslims, Sikhs or Jains, Parsis or Christians, would be pouring into one another's ears their tale of woe under the high cost of living that has not made a distinction of caste or creed, religion or community. It is not unknown that in Bombay the Muslim and Hindu capitalists were grumbling at the more generous scale of dearness allowance given by the Tatas, which foolhardy step forced their hands also on the question. In the Punjab, Nawab of Mamdet and Sir Chhotu Ram may have far more in common with each other than with the poor unfortunate tenants of their own community. These instances could be multiplied indefinitely.

A well-known English judge once cynically remarked: "Truth will out,—even in an affidavit." In the same strain, it may be said that wisdom will sprout out,—even in an Execu-

tive Councillor! Sir Sultan Ahmad in a speech in Patna in 1940, said, "Our problems are the problems of all. The problem of the Hindu is the problem of the Muslim, and the problem of the Muslim is the problem of the Hindu."

Labour and Kisans have so far remained untainted by the communal virus. It is unfortunate that the Indian Communists, who had upto 1942 at least the merit of being non-communal, in their anxiety to help in the war effort of India, and to that end to curry favour with the foreigner, have conveniently forgotten all their previous denunciation both of the communalist Muslim League and the Imperialist and tried to give their unstinted support to the demand of the Muslim League. It is amusing to see Mr. Jinnah treat them like the unwanted dog, who, in spite of kicks and stones thrown at it, tries to foist itself on a new master.

The second direction, in which efforts should be made for a solution of the communal question has, by now, been sufficiently indicated. Efforts should be made to see that the future free India will have an equalitarian economic structure, or as Prof. Shah puts it, "our future constitution should be republican and equalitarian, as well as democratic and federal".²²

That, however, is a question of the future, and Prof. Shah's objective, even still more remote,

²²K. T. Shah, *Why Pakistan and Why Not*, p. 214.

although he proceeds on the assumption that there will be a treaty between Britain and India,—very probably because Mr. Churchill, now completely supported by Mr. Attlee, leader of the British Labour Party, is all for the non-liquidation of the Empire!

It is beyond the scope of this work to indicate what sort of economy is most suited to the Indian genius, whether it is communism, as originally contemplated by Lenin, and since forgotten by Stalin, or a trusteeship of the Gandhian variety, advocated also by Mr. M. R. Masani in his *Socialism Reconsidered*, or its complete organisation on the co-operative basis. For our purposes, it is sufficient to indicate that an equalitarian economy is absolutely necessary, it may be arrived at by a trial and error method, or in any other manner. Needless to say, that, in any case, the approach will be non-violent.

And, what is to be done in the meantime? The communal mentality should be uprooted, at least from among those that preach non-communalism, that is, the Congress. Its resolution on Fundamental Rights, passed at the Karachi Sessions is ideal. It can hardly be improved upon. But so would an Englishman say that the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 with its emphasis on equality of service without distinction of colour or religion is also ideal. The only fault of the latter has been that it is invariably meant to be broken even in foisting "experts," when a global war for freedom

and democracy is alleged to be fought, in which all that is evil is Nazi and all that is good is,—Imperialist!

However, the Congress Resolution must not share the fate of the Queen's Proclamation at the hands of the body that passed it. An off-hand instance comes to mind, if a legal appointment in 1938 in the Bombay Province, for which advertisements by the Public Service Commission appeared, but those of the particular legal fraternity from which the appointment was to be made knew even before the advertisement appeared who the successful candidate was, belonging as he did to the same sub-community as the Hon'ble the Home Member! An amusing episode in connection with the same appointment was that the Public Service Commission with a Chairman, sporting the neutral white colour, recommended a candidate, who, by the terms of the appointment, which required a standing of a certain number of years, was not even eligible! It was not a question of communal bias, but the fact remained that this was how the Commission worked. Pandit Nehru, in one of his letters to Mr. Jinnah, asserts that the Karachi resolution of the Congress has taken the Congress one step further, albeit a small step, towards socialism. However, as the authors of *The Communal Triangle* rightly point out, the Congress Ministries, when they were in power, did not make the economic approach to the masses as near and telling as could have been.

Instances akin to that of the appointment, just referred to, could be multiplied. It is not confined to the Congress. In fact, under the League Ministry, the instances would be more numerous. But two wrongs cannot make a right. Yet, also, as Prof. Wadia said in his address to the Tata Institute, above referred to, "blood is thicker than water," and such instances are bound to occur !

Mr. Baig, the ex-Sheriff of Bombay, who also addressed the same Institute in the same series, laid more stress on this aspect of communalism and appealed to the majority community to be more liberal. Occasionally, it has to be admitted, it becomes a question of adequate training and qualification. It is well-known that even Muslim shop-keepers and merchants have Hindu accountants. In a profit economy, banks and mercantile offices cannot afford to be generous in communal matters at the cost of efficiency. Yet, there are several cases where it is a sheer case of "blood being thicker than water". However, when that happens among those that belong to the organisation that has passed a resolution on fundamental rights, it can only be considered not right, but wrong.

This may be said to be not only a palliative, but also, in a sense, a preparation for the attainment of the two objectives, adumbrated above, as the principal means for the removal of communal disharmony, *viz.*, the eradication of the foreigner and an equalitarian economy.

It has often been repeated in many quarters that the villages have so far been free from the communal taint, that the peasants, whether Hindus or Muslims in the respective provinces dress alike, speak the same provincial language and are indistinguishable from one another, as regards their communal affiliations. Even Mr. Jinnah, if he ever finds time to visit a Punjab, Madras or Bengal village would not be able to distinguish the members of his "great Muslim nation" from the mere Hindus!

It is also significant that in matters pertaining to Indians outside India, the most rabid communalist talks and thinks in terms of India and Indians. On the questions of the maltreatment of the nationals, settled in South and East Africa or the entry of Indians into "White" Australia, neither the President of the Muslim League nor his deputy, the Nawab Zada Liaqat Ali nor any other satellite has ever discriminated between a Muslim or a Hindu. In the latest Assembly debate, (November 1944) on the South African question, the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League party was as staunch for upholding the right of all Indians as the leader of the Congress party! Mr. Moon in his *Strangers in India* also makes this point! "It is possible that in the attempt to reach some such general agreement with other countries, the supposed disagreement of Muslims and Hindus and their mutual suspicions and fears would be seen to be more imaginary than real; for in these matters, the real clash of interests is not so much between Hindu and Muslims,

as between different provinces and regions of India”.

One may not be in agreement with the reason given in the latter part of the quotation, but it makes a point that is worthy of note. Mr. Baig, in his speech at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, also emphasised an alignment of the communities on a provincial as well as a linguistic basis. There is much to be said in favour of as much provincial autonomy as possible, but as critics like Prof. Wadia point out, in times of crisis, as of the Bengal debacle of 1943-44, the absence of a strong centre is detrimental to the interests of the country as a whole.

The caste system among the Hindus is held to be responsible for a considerable cleavage in the communities. The Muslims allege that they strongly feel the exclusiveness of the Hindus, that would not let them sit to the same meal with a Muslim, howsoever otherwise friendly they are. The Muslims conveniently forget that the most venerable and saintly Hindu or any other Indian can never set eyes on the *purdah* women, who are most numerous among the Muslims. This apart, it has to be remembered that the caste system is almost as old as the hills, but never made for any communal differentiation, till the advent of the White foreigner, who could not absorb himself in this great country, but preferred to bleed it white for his own sordid gains. The method of his rule made it incumbent on him to rely

on weights and counterweights, and these dead weights could be best created by playing off one community against the other. That has, time and again, been admitted by the foreigner himself.

Thus, although the caste system, by itself, may not be said to play any appreciable part in the creation and maintenance of the communal problem, it is certain that untouchability among the Hindus should be early destroyed, root and branch. This must be so for two reasons. Firstly, the oppressive treatment of the Harijans makes for their conversions into the two proselytising religions Mohammedanism and Christianity. The artificially swelling numbers of these minorities, particularly in the case of the former, provides a fertile field for the communalist 'leaders' to make a bid for, personal power. And, even the depressed class 'leaders' similarly thrive on the wrongs, imaginary, invented or real, done to the Harijans by the high caste Hindus. But the matter does not end here. The social, and therefore, *ipso facto*, the economic injustice involved in the existence of untouchability is a great handicap to the establishment of an equalitarian order, which, has previously been considered as the *sine qua non* for the solution of the communal problem.

Besides these, the other suggestions that have already been made in the literature on the subject, or which we may make, could be only in the nature of palliatives, or a tinkering

with the problem. Mr. Cyril Modak, in his *India's Destiny*, which has, as its main theme the slogan that "Caste must go," suggests decommunalisation by the establishment of non-communal colonies in villagos and towns. The suggestion is indeed worth trying, but, as the author himself says, it is merely a preparation for the main task.

In the same class may be placed Dr. Jayakar's suggestion, made a decade back at the Nagpada Neighbourhood and quoted by Clifford Mashart in *The Hindu-Muslim Problem in India* of representatives from the various communities meeting and studying the problem, or again as in free America, after the British rule was removed,—a fact which Dr. Jayakar forgets to mention,—discussing common sanitary problems or plans for making the city beautiful etc.

Invitations to and willing presence at celebrations of the holidays of one community of the others also falls in the same category as Dr. Jayakar's suggestion. This year (1944), the Idd and the Divali were jointly celebrated in London by *all* Indians. On the day of their prophet's birth-day anniversary, the Parsis hold meetings that are addressed by speakers of the other communities. This principle can profitably be extended, although Mr. Jinnah will be sure to issue a "keep off the grass" warning, so far as his community is concerned, and he will prefer only prating by and to Muslim at the Idd and Moharrum celebrations!

Mr. Manu Subedar's suggestion of the Hindus electing Muslim candidates and the Muslims electing Hindu candidates appears to us to be too artificial, and may quite likely aggravate the problem, sought to be solved. India cannot forget the very insulting phraseology of Mr. Jinnah's telegram to Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress, when the latter approached the former for coming together for solving the communal problem. Muslim candidates put up for such an election may become the "show-boys" of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha would not hesitate to dub the Hindu candidates as the puppets of the Muslim League!

Dr. Radhakumud Mukerji in *A New Approach to the Communal Problem* quotes the instance of Russia. So do we. But the learned author does not say in so many words that this was made possible in the U. S. S. R. and not in Tsarist Russia. Perhaps, he desires the intelligent reader to draw that inference!

Mr. M. N. Dalal in his *Whether Minorities* has a number of suggestions to make, such as that religious toleration should be present, (in spite of the Viceroy asking his stock question to the district officers, given by Mr. Moon from first hand experience?), that fundamental rights should be statutorily guaranteed. When a party knows that he has the veto on the political advance of the country, and does not want to listen to reason, how would this help? Mr. Dalal also suggests statutory confirmation

of the majorities and weightage of important minorities. The Congress would have no objection to that, but Mr. Jinnah does not seem inclined to listen to any reasonable arguments. Mr. Dalal also wants the recognition of two languages and scripts. Pandit Nehru already conceded that in his long and lucid but fruitless correspondence with Mr. Jinnah in 1937. The latter did not either agree or disagree with the Panditji, nor did he say what exactly he wanted. In the recently published *Leaders' Correspondence with Mr. Jinnah* edited by Syed Sharifuddin Peerzada, the section,—the longest in the book,—of the letters exchanged between the Muslim League President and the Congress leader will repay study. Mr. Jinnah appears as a past master in art of dissimulation and fencing, and his record could hardly be surpassed by any other individual in India. Suggestions about the national flag or the national anthem, which are made by Mr. Dalal, and which the Panditji took care to discuss with Mr. Jinnah, pale into absolute insignificance before the real problem that needs to be tackled.

Dr. Beni Prasad's small but brilliant brochure, *Communal Settlement*, so far the latest addition, to the literature on the subject, may be said to be a very persuasive and fair treatment of the subject.

Visualising an All-India union with autonomy for the Provinces, the learned author divides the entire range of administrative sub-

jects into four categories. The Union list contains foreign affairs, defence, transport, currency and exchange. Such subjects as subsidiary means of transport, industries, commerce, census, social relationships etc. belong to a second group and are to be administered by autonomous units, but the Union Government may pass normative legislation. The third group has matters of health, hygiene, electrification, irrigation etc. which are exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Provinces, but in which inter-provincial consultations and deliberations are desirable. All other subjects, affecting the day to day life of the people or pertaining to religious, cultural and civil rights, subject to effective guarantees for minorities are exclusively for the Provincial Governments. Another important point made by the author, and one which is common to others, is a declaration of fundamental rights. It may bear repetition that the Congress has already sought to clarify this point by its resolution at Karachi on the subject. The Congress Resolutions on Fundamental Rights and Duties and Economic and Social programme are quoted *in extenso* in the Appendix to acquaint the unwary reader with their elements, and, if it is possible, to dispel the doubts and suspicions, even of a confirmed Muslim Leaguer.

Sir Ardeshir Dalal's *An Alternative to Pakistan* is, more or less, on the same lines, and although the author has found an alternative to the National Government of his own advocacy in an Executive Councillorship, that big

effort ought not to detract from the merit of his previous small effort.

If it were only a question of framing a constitution Prof. Shah's and Dr. Beni Prasad's suggestions have already been quoted. A special suggestion may be made to vest the judiciary with more or less the same powers that are enjoyed by it in the constitution of the U. S. A.

"These (the fundamental) rights may be placed beyond danger of infringement by legislatures and executives, under the protection of the judiciary on the principle of judicial supremacy, which has been the sheet-anchor of American constitutional development. The Union Court shall be expressly empowered to declare *ultra vires* any legislative statute or executive act which contravenes the fundamental declaration of rights. The proviso of judicial review should go a long way towards inspiring a sense of security in minorities in the Union as a whole or in any of the units".³⁹

A statutory guarantee of fundamental rights would leave the personal laws of every community untouched, would provide for freedom of worship, freedom for the spread of its own culture, the right to the use by a community of its own language, if it has any one special language. All this is implied and has been expressed, but that has not aided the solution of the communal differences.

³⁹ Beni Prasad, *Communal Settlement*, p. 34-5.

When cancer is once diagnosed in a patient, it is invariably fatal to resort to local remedies, or worse still, to have recourse to quacks, masquerading as healers. As time wears on, the cancer spreads all over the body, and the victim lingers on in unsufferable agony, till an unbearably painful end comes as a relief, anamolous as the statement may seem.

It has been recognised on all hands that this unhappy land has been affected by a foreign cancerous growth. The communal *malaria* is merely the spread of the roots of this growth deeper into the body, mind and soul of Mother India. A major operation alone can afford relief,—in all spheres. Desperate diseases, once diagnosed, call for equally drastic remedies. It is on this assumption, that, with a surgeon's knife, the problem before us, is sought to be approached here. Although, therefore, sleeping draughts, injections, and local applications have been also suggested, it needs for a perfectly frank expression of a candid opinion, to state that the only remedy is by a major and two fold operation,—first, the removal of the extraneous matter, with all its roots; next, in order to avoid such matter being substituted by an indigenous substance of the same unhealthy type, the grafting of the health-giving, revitalising gland of an equalitarian economy. In only these two principal operations rest the hope for the survival, in her proper and rightful stature and status, of hoary Mother India, once the *Prima donna* of the world. Prof. Wadia, in his address at the Tata Institute rightly

pointed out, and his opinion is shared by many and being borne out by daily occurrences, that the longer the time that elapsed before the remedy was applied, the greater would be the spread of the disease, and the more difficult its cure.

More and still more distinct grows the writing on the wall. It is for all to read,—not only those that run will read it.

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